

THE IMPLICATIONS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

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1. CONSCIOUSNESS

Here it is demonstrated that feeling is, by itself, sufficient proof for consciousness:

{P1.1} If feeling, then aware.¹

{P1.2} If aware, then conscious.

{P1.3} Feeling.

Therefore, {P1.4} conscious.²

By 'feeling', reference is made to any kind of pain or pleasure. Indeed, it does not make sense that a feeling could be experienced without awareness of the same, even if that awareness does not entail self-awareness.³

And to apply it to a particular being:

{P1.5} For any being x, if x is feeling, then x is conscious.⁴

Yet it is often difficult for an outside observer to have genuine knowledge of whether or not a being external to itself is actually feeling. In those cases, we can apply these principles:

{P1.6} If seems to be feeling, then seems to be conscious.

{P1.7} If seems to be conscious, then presume to be conscious.

*This establishes a **presumption of consciousness** when a being seems capable of feeling. This presumption can only be overruled in cases where awareness⁵ is positively justified not to be present.⁶ The full justification for why it is better to err in an over-belief rather than under-belief in the existence of a possible consciousness will become apparent in the course of this paper.⁷*

¹ It is also true that one cannot feel without existing. (I feel, therefore I am, or '*Sentio ergo sum*').

² *Polysyllogism*. If feeling (P), then aware (Q). If aware (Q), then conscious (R). P, therefore R.

³ Human infants, for example.

⁴ $\forall x (Fx \rightarrow Cx)$.

⁵ As most proximate to consciousness.

⁶ Like a non-sentient robot or toy, or a living organism without any mechanism for feeling.

⁷ Take 'consciousness' to mean the same thing as a 'sentient being', or senting.

2. THE PRIMAL OUGHT

*An experience of pain reveals two axioms:*⁸

{P2.1} *An experience of pain is bad.*⁹

{P2.2} *An experience of pain ought to be stopped.*

The second of these can be rephrased as:

{P2.3} *An experience of pain ought not to be experienced.*

*Either way, this introduces an ought, indeed the **Primal Ought**, which is the origin of duty and morality.*

*The violation of an ought is **bad**, which is reinforced if not totally sprung from {P2.1} above. Further, where it is bad to violate an ought, it is **good** to not violate it, i.e. to fulfill it.*

{P2.4} *The fulfillment of an ought is good.*¹⁰

{P2.5} *The violation of an ought is bad.*

Oughts are bivalent, and although a given moral status may have both good and bad aspects,¹¹ we can set down the axiom that good and bad are themselves distinct and non-overlapping properties, exclusive to each other:

{P2.6} *Good and bad are mutually exclusive.*¹²

Here we can see the Primal Ought not only directly experienced but deduced from the badness of pain and the nature of oughts:

⁸ Suffering is the experience of pain, though pain itself is bad as the proximate cause of suffering. Where context does not otherwise specify, take pain to mean the experience of pain. Also note that to suffer more than another means to experience more pain than they are experiencing; the same stimulus for different consciousnesses does not by necessity evoke the same pain or other feeling. In a sense, all pain (even psychological pain) is of physical origin, since the brain itself is physical; in another sense, all pain is psychological, in that it is experienced psychologically no matter its origin. In all senses suffering is painful and pain is suffering, and we shall use *pain* to describe the experience of pain (*suffering*).

⁹ An experience of pain instantly reveals an intrinsic property, namely badness. In other words, an instance of pain tells us that a duty is being violated (*i.e.* to not feel pain)—and that such violation is bad. To the extent that there may be a distinction between pain and the experience of pain, the former only isolates pain as a concept. As a concept, there is no essence of pain, and thus no invocation of the Primal Ought or its violation, and thus no badness stemming from such a violation. Yet the actuality of pain contains its essence (badness), revealed by the Primal Ought. A thought about pain is not itself pain, but only a thought, and a thought is an experience (an experience which may or may not be painful).

¹⁰ The fulfilment of an *ought* and an *ought not* are the same, to the effect that they both refer to adherence to a duty.

¹¹ **Moral aspect** is the minor moral(s) of an act or condition.

¹² Disjunctive syllogism (Either A or B; Not A; Therefore B). Good and bad are distinct and non-overlapping properties of morality: any violation of an ought however slight is bad, and the fulfillment of an ought however slight is good. There is no point of meeting. It is apparent that all conditions have moral standing from the Primal Ought alone, in that it is not only amoral that a rock is not experiencing pain, it is good that a rock is not experiencing pain.

{P2.7} An experience of pain is bad.
 {P2.8} If something is bad, it ought not to be experienced.
 Therefore, {P2.9} pain ought not to be experienced.

And mutual support stemming from the Primal Ought itself:

{P2.10} Pain ought not to be experienced.
 {P2.11} If something ought not to be experienced, then it must be bad.
 Therefore, {P2.12} pain is bad.

All conditions have moral standing from the Primal Ought alone. Here it is demonstrated that the absence of pain is not only not bad, but actually good:

{P2.13} A condition is either with or without an experience of pain.¹³
 {P2.14} A condition without an experience of pain fulfills an ought.
 {P2.4} The fulfillment of an ought is good.
 Therefore, {P2.15} a condition without 'experience of pain' is good.^{14 15}
 {P2.16} All conditions regard pain (they either have it or they do not).
 {P2.17} A condition regarding pain is either good or bad.
 Therefore, {P2.18} every condition is either good or bad.
 {P2.19} A given condition is not bad.
 Therefore, {P2.20} the given condition is good.¹⁶

3. THE PRIMAL INTEREST

A feeling of pain also reveals an interest in avoiding pain. This is distinct from the Primal Ought in that the Primal Ought refers to the urge concomitant with pain, whereas the interest to avoid pain remains after the pain has gone. Though this interest

¹³ The Law of Non-Contradiction.

¹⁴ Since an experience of pain is bad, it is not only an experience without pain that is good, but any condition without an experience pain that is good. Every scenario exterior to an experience of pain thereby fulfills the Primal Ought and is thus good at least in this one sense (and no matter how independently bad, could be further worsened by a violation of the Primal Ought). It is apparent that all conditions have moral standing from the Primal Ought alone, in that it is not only amoral that a rock is not experiencing pain, it is good that a rock is not experiencing pain, even if the rock has no particular subjectivity. There is still moral standing when scoped to a rock (or to any hypothetical) with respect to the Primal Ought, insofar as it belongs to the set of 'everything' outside of any sentence of pain.

¹⁵ And not just *not bad*. This is not asserting that a non-painful situation is good because is non-painful, but specifically because a non-painful situation is positively adhering to the Primal Ought to be pain-free. There is a difference between 'no pain is good' and 'non-pain is good' just as there is between 'no rainbow is black' and 'non-rainbows are black'. Yet to take the first pair in their correct grammatical form ('[experiencing] no pain is good' thus '[experiencing] non-pain is good' or 'an experience without pain is good', we can see that this is not analogous to the rainbow pair, and is logically valid. Some feeling x that is not pain, even if it is uniquely bad by some other means, still is somewhat good in that it is not pain. In other words, a feeling (or other experience), whether good, neutral, or bad, could always be worse if it were also painful. Please see the section on *Moral Strands*.

¹⁶ This does not mean that the absence of pain precludes all badness, merely that it precludes any badness arising from the Primal Ought. In effect, even if it is both possible and actually occurring that one is experiencing some form of badness despite being free of pain, one is also at least being favored by some goodness too since the Primal Ought is being fulfilled. An unviolated (fulfilled) Primal Ought constitutes a reserve of badness which if actuated would make things distinctly worse, no matter how severe some hypothetical badness from another origin may be.

is revealed as a brute fact, it can also be deduced from the Primal Ought and the badness of pain, thus:

{P3.1} If something ought not be experienced, then it ought to be avoided.¹⁷

{P3.2} Pain ought not to be experienced.

Therefore, {P3.3} an experience of pain ought to be avoided.

This is the **Primal Interest** of a consciousness: that such a being avoids any experience of pain. The failure of this interest means the failure to avoid pain, which means to experience it.

Therefore, {P3.4} avoidance of an experience of pain is good.

Therefore, {P3.5} failure to avoid an experience of pain is bad.

{P3.6} For any chance regarding an ought, those for it being fulfilled are good, and those for it being violated are bad.¹⁸

This applies the same principle to what we already know about the nature of oughts.

{P3.7} If something ought to be avoided, any chance of it not being avoided is bad.¹⁹

{P3.8} An experience of pain ought to be avoided.

Therefore, {P3.9} a chance of an experience of pain is bad.

Therefore, {P3.10} a chance without an experience of pain is good.²⁰

{P3.11} For any ought, a chance of it being fulfilled is good.

{P3.12} For any ought, a chance of it being violated is bad.

The Primal Ought is the authoritative command given by pain itself, whereas the Primal Interest speaks to us even without the presence of pain, vicariously; it is an echo of pain's command. The ought shows that this interest has a moral quality.

If one is in pain, the Primal Ought reveals the interest to be without pain (the Primal Interest). After the pain has gone, its corresponding manifestation of the Primal Ought has also disappeared, though the interest which arose from it, rather than disappearing, remains—and, indeed, is valid retroactively to the effect of always existing.

¹⁷ *a fortiori* (a *minore ad maius*). Also, it is in the nature of a duty to perform what one ought to do, and to avoid what one ought not to do.

¹⁸ A chance represents an occasion on which the postulated does indeed occur. When an ought is violated, it is bad, and fulfilled, good. Given that a whole probability is divided by some number of chances (it is in fact a bundle of chances), a probability with a non-zero chance of an ought being violated is bad whereas a probability with a zero chance of an ought being violated (and thus fulfilled) is good. Thus any mere chance of pain (*i.e.*, risk) is itself bad, and any chance of an extant pain being eliminated is good.

¹⁹ The fulfillment of an ought means perfect obedience (of a condition, not necessarily a sentient agent), and as has been proven, this obedience extends to avoiding its violation. The success or failure of avoidance in obedience to an ought relies on probabilities, on the range of impossibility to certainty or any in between, and while a mere chance of an ought being violated is not as bad as the actual violation, it is still worse (more bad) than nothing. A moral negation.

²⁰ This could also be phrased, 'Therefore, the lack of a chance of an experience of pain is good'. Though the 'lack of chance' in this context constitutes a chance in its own right, and part of the whole probability of occurrence.

*In other words, an instance of pain reveals that it was always in one's interest to avoid it, even before one was aware of such an interest.*²¹

4. TYPES OF OUGHTS

An ought can only be known by:

{P4.1} *Direct experience of good and bad.*

{P4.2} *Valid deduction from the previous.*

*While every ought entails good for its fulfillment and bad for its violation,²² not every ought equally empowers these moral attributes. There are four different kinds of oughts:*²³

*A **pure ought** has the highest theoretical precedence; wherein there is direct experience of bad for its violation, and direct experience of good for its fulfillment—in each case intrinsic to the ought itself. There is no known pure ought in existence, at least in humans. Note that extrinsic rewards and punishments, however perfectly applied, do not constitute pure oughts.*

*A **push ought** conveys a direct experience of badness for its violation, though no direct experience for its fulfillment.²⁴ There are at least two types of push oughts, namely the Primal Ought and the Primal Interest.*

*A **pull ought** conveys a direct experience of goodness for its fulfillment, but no direct experience for its violation. At least two exist: the Mesmeric Ought and Mesmeric Interest (see below).*

*The above three types can collectively be called **foundational oughts**, in that each of them is self-sufficient. No skill in deduction is required to learn that pain is bad. These oughts speak directly to the consciousness without mediation. A direct experience of badness is more important than an inferred badness, and the same goes for goodness.²⁵*

*A **static ought** gives no direct experience of good or bad for either its fulfillment or violation. Its whole substance therefore is derived from those that do, namely the foundational oughts above. It consists of two different classes:*

²¹ This underlines that non-human animals capable of pain also have an interest in avoiding it, even if specifically unaware of that or any other interest.

²² *If ought, then do. If ought not, then do not.*

²³ One might ask why these oughts exist at all, and to what ultimate purpose? The blind forces of evolution developed them without any guidance. Organisms that happened to have developed pain and pleasure in various ways and thereby survived in their habitats long enough to reproduce tended to pass along these mutations which were often mutated in turn. There is no transcendent goal of consciousness or these experiences of pain and pleasure, and even their effect of helping a conscious organism survive long enough to breed is purely incidental. Nevertheless, to be conscious is to be subject to these incidental oughts, not unlike a partially self-directed and sentient ball rolling among the flippers and bumpers and guardrails of a pinball machine, against a slope of circumstance.

²⁴ Which is why a push-ought can apply even to the non-sentient, in its fulfillment.

²⁵ It is not as though a badness derived by deduction has any possibility of not really being a badness after all, but rather that a badness directly experienced is of greater urgency and thus importance.

- **Axiomatic oughts**, of which at least two exist (the Meta Ought and Meta Interest, see below);

- **Derivative oughts**, which comprise the great majority of all oughts.²⁶ A second degree derivative static ought is an ought directly in service to a pure, push, or pull ought (which are always of the first degree). A third degree one is in service to a second degree one, and so on. For example:

1. Push ought: The pain in my finger ought to be stopped.
2. 2nd degree derivative ought: I ought to remove my finger from the flame.
3. 3rd degree derivative ought: I ought to pull my arm back.

A **True Ought** is any ought that is real (i.e., one of the above), and not just a preference or arbitrary command. It is either a pure, push, or pull ought, or an ought rightly derived from them. Below is an example of a succession of four true oughts:

- 1 - Primal Interest: 'I ought to avoid pain'.
- 2 - 2nd degree derivative ought: 'I ought not burn myself'.
- 3 - 3rd degree derivative ought: 'I ought not touch the fireplace'.
- 4 - 4th degree derivative ought: 'I ought not go near the fireplace'.

Lines (2) through (4) are different degrees of derivative ought, with lower degrees taking higher precedence (being closer to the foundation). An ought may be true though being dozens of degrees from a foundation, though with more links comes greater risk for error.²⁷

The 4th degree ought of (4) presumes that going near the fireplace furnishes a chance of touching it, which in turn furnishes a chance to burn oneself, which in turn furnishes a chance of pain. Stronger chains can override this one, such as the need to go near the fireplace to tend to the fire and prevent it going out and resulting in the painful condition of being cold, or to prevent it going out of control and burning the house down. In this case the ought to not go near the fireplace is still valid, though other approaches to the Primal Ought might demand more urgent attention and obedience.

In contrast, the statement 'you ought to choose a blue shirt instead of a green one' is not a true ought unless it is firmly grounded in a valid causal chain as above. This also goes for more colloquial oughts like 'you ought to turn left to get to the store'. While conditional, such colloquial oughts do not necessarily even attempt to convey moral goals.²⁸

5. THE MESMERIC OUGHT

An experience of pleasure reveals two further axioms:

²⁶ Even if one only counts those which are truly legitimate.

²⁷ For a given consciousness at any time, there is some number of relevant true oughts. The derivative ones furnish the best chance of finding good and avoiding bad, though vast and perhaps even perfect knowledge and processing power would be necessary to know and weigh all of them, particularly those with long causal chains.

²⁸ Getting to the store could by stages prevent a violation of the Primal Ought (being hungry, for example). However, such a colloquial ought as presented in the example is not necessarily predicated on a chain to that extent, or even one at all.

{P5.1} An experience of pleasure is good.

{P5.2} An experience of pleasure ought not to be stopped.²⁹

Whereas the Primal Ought is a push ought, the Mesmeric Ought is a pull ought; it furnishes an intrinsic reward for its fulfillment (the experience of pleasure itself).

There is no downside however to neglecting the maintenance or acquisition of pleasure that is independent of the Primal Ought or Primal Interest—such as frustration at the loss or denial of such a pleasure.³⁰

Here we can see that each axiom can also be deduced from the other:

{P5.3} An experience of pleasure is good.

{P5.4} If something is good, it ought to be experienced.

Therefore, {P5.5} pleasure ought to be experienced.

{P5.6} If something ought to be experienced, then it ought not to be stopped.

Therefore, {P5.7} an experience of pleasure ought not to be stopped.

And secondly:³¹

{P5.8} An experience of pleasure ought not to be stopped.

{P5.9} If something ought not to be stopped, then it must be good.

Therefore, {P5.10} pleasure is good.

As we have seen, every entity is either with or without an experience of pain, and thus some good or bad can scope to it in right of the Primal Ought (a moral status of the first degree). With the push-ought of pleasure, however, any first degree badness only devolves upon a situation where an ongoing pleasure stops. And even so, that badness (being only inferred) is much less important than a badness that is directly experienced.

While there is badness scoped to any condition without the experience of pleasure, it is an indirect badness—one that derives from the static-axiomatic ought that good ought to be experienced (which is violated when and precisely to the extent that good is not experienced), and it is two degrees removed even from this.³²

²⁹ This is different than 'Pleasure ought to be experienced', since the immediate axiom simply states that an ongoing and extant pleasure ought not to cease, and does not directly state that pleasure ought to be sought from a state of non-pleasure. However, this latter ought is proven anyway by a simple deduction. To not be stopped implies an increase (in duration only), though not necessarily in scope or intensity. That is, that the experience of pleasure should endure and lengthen, without a qualitative change in that ongoing experience. A desire for more than is being experienced is not intrinsic to pleasure itself, and this longing is a type of pain.

³⁰ The Primal Ought and Interest can be used to create a duty to seek pleasure indirectly. This occurs when there is a longing or other type of painful frustration to the end that one should experience pleasure in order to relieve such painful longing.

³¹ Here on the second line is it important to bear in mind that the goodness is apparent by the 'ought not' of the previous clause. An ought has good and bad on either side of its fulfillment and violation respectively, and so if a true ought declares that the cessation of some ongoing condition is bad, then the continuance of that condition is good by definition—at least in right of that particular ought (some conditions can produce multiple effects simultaneously).

³² It is good that a rock is not experiencing pain. The goodness that it is not experiencing pain comes by the fulfillment of a foundational.

6. THE MESMERIC INTEREST

A feeling of pleasure also reveals an interest in having it continue.

{P6.1} If something ought not be stopped, then it ought to be continued.

{P6.2} An experience of pleasure ought not to be stopped.

Therefore, {P6.3} an experience of pleasure ought to be continued.

*This is the **Mesmeric Interest** of a consciousness. The failure of this interest means the failure to continue pleasure, which means the cessation of it.*

Therefore, {P6.4} continuance of an experience of pleasure is good.

Therefore, {P6.5} failure to continue an experience of pleasure is bad.

In practice, there is no difference between the Mesmeric Ought and the Mesmeric Interest, since both exist toward the continuance of an ongoing pleasure. Though it does reveal and support that every ought forms an interest toward the fulfillment of that ought.

Note that the Mesmeric Interest is not an interest for pleasure to be commenced from a state of non-pleasure. There is a derivative ought to that end, but it comes two degrees removed, riding along with the principle that any good ought to be experienced, and pleasure, being good, therefore ought to be experienced. This interest thus comes about in a very general way, the violation of which results in no direct experience of bad, though the fulfillment of which in this particular case results in a direct experience of good.

7. THE META OUGHT AND INTEREST

While it is bad to have, say, some risk of pain, it is also independently bad that one is experiencing any badness at all, rather than not doing so. For example:

{P7.1} An unavoidable pain is bad in that it is pain, and also bad in that it is unavoidable.

In other words, it is bad in particular that one is experiencing the badness of risk of pain, but it is also bad in general that one is experiencing any particular badness.³³

{P7.2} The nature of 'ought' reveals that goodness ought to exist and badness ought not to exist.

*We have already seen that to fulfill an ought is good, and to violate an ought is bad. This directly implies the **Meta Ought**, namely that every ought ultimately supports the creation and sustaining of goodness, and the avoidance and abolition of badness, and it is this ulterior ought that is the logical basis of every other ought.*

The Primal Ought, in contrast, is the most direct ought, in that it needs no such logical deduction to know.³⁴

³³ In another example, the physical and emotional pains of a natural disaster are bad, but it is bad in a different sense that there was a natural disaster at all rather than there not being one.

We have already seen the Meta Ought alluded to in previous sections:

{P2.8} If something is bad, it ought not to be experienced.

{P5.4} If something is good, it ought to be experienced.

A formal statement of the Meta Ought is:

{P7.3} Goodness ought to exist and badness ought not to exist.

Further deductions take not only quality but quantity of these values into account:

{P7.4} More good is preferable to less good.

{P7.5} Less bad is preferable to more bad.

When subjected to an arbitrary amount of pain, it is one's Primal Interest to avoid experiencing even more pain (in intensity, scope, and/or duration): more pain also correspondingly contravenes the Primal Ought.

Therefore, {P7.6} some arbitrary amount of pain less than maximum pain is preferable to maximum pain.

{P7.7} Calm exists.³⁵

{P7.8} Both pleasure and calm are good in that they fulfill the Primal Ought of not being experiences of pain.

The opposite of pain is not-pain: i.e., pleasure and calm.

{P7.9} Whereas calm is good in only one sense (fulfilling the Primal Ought), pleasure is good in two senses (in fulfilling the Primal Ought, and by its own nature).

Therefore, {P7.10} there is a moral preference for the good of pleasure over the good of calm (though only when the gain of such pleasure or its potential does not entail more badness than the alternative of calm).

One has an interest (via the nature of oughts) to obtain the highest goodness which does not entail any badness, such as the cost or risk of pain. This is the **Meta Interest**.

Since goodness ought to exist and badness ought not to exist, subverting goodness or promoting badness is a violation of the Meta Ought, just as promoting goodness or subverting badness is a fulfillment:³⁶

{P7.11} If goodness ought to exist, then it ought not be subverted.

{P7.12} If goodness ought to exist, then it ought to be promoted.

{P7.13} Goodness ought to exist.

³⁴ Here one might question why the ought furnished by an experience of pleasure is not deemed primal, or at least co-primal. It is more important to avoid the active badness of pain than to avoid the passive badness that exists in the deprivation of pleasure.

³⁵ i.e., a condition of neither pleasure nor pain.

³⁶ Here, subversion means to prevent, reduce, or minimize, and promotion means to cause, increase, or maximize.

Therefore, {P7.14} goodness ought not be subverted.

Therefore, {P7.15} goodness ought to be promoted.

{P7.16} If badness ought not exist, then it ought to be subverted.

{P7.17} If badness ought not exist, then it ought not be promoted.

{P7.18} Badness ought not exist.

Therefore, {P7.19} badness ought to be subverted.

Therefore, {P7.20} badness ought not to be promoted.

For any act or thought or belief, seven possibilities exist as to its rightful treatment by any relevant consciousnesses depending on scope and standing. It ought to be either:

1. Required.

2. Encouraged.

3. Observed.

4. Nothing.

5. Ignored.

6. Discouraged.

7. Forbidden.

Which of these pertain is determined solely by morals. Preferences are themselves valences derived from subjective moral value, though as we will see later subjective moral value is not the only kind of moral value in existence.

The Meta Ought also reveals the corresponding Meta Truth:

{P7.21} It is good for good to exist and bad for bad to exist.

8. SUBJECTIVE BADNESS DEFINED

*What is badness? Subjective badness—that existing solely through the experience of a consciousness without reference to any others, can be listed as follows:*³⁷

B1. ACTIVE BADNESS

B1.1. A violation of a pure ought is actively bad.

If a pure ought exists, its violation means a direct experience of badness, like an experience of pain, but also a direct experience of goodness for its fulfillment (the absence of which make this violation worse than just a direct experience of badness itself).

B1.2. An experience of pain is actively bad.

An experience of pain reveals its intrinsic property of badness. This is separate from the Primal Ought.

³⁷ Objective badness is outlined later.

B1.3. A violation of a push ought is actively bad.

The Primal Ought and the Primal Interest are push oughts. Their violation means an experience of pain and thus a direct badness.

B2. PASSIVE BADNESS

B2.1. A violation of a pull ought is passively bad.

Pull oughts do not furnish a direct experience of badness for their violation, and thus such violation is only a passive badness. Yet the fulfillment of a pull ought furnishes a direct experience of goodness, and so such a violation also implies a deprivation of that active goodness, which makes such a violation worse than the violation of an ought without such a deprivation.

B2.2. A violation of the Meta Ought is passively bad.

Neither the violation nor fulfillment of the Meta Ought provide direct experiences of goodness and badness, though its violation is still worse than other static oughts (i.e., derivative oughts) since the very existence of those other oughts is inferred by the Meta Ought.

B2.3. A violation of a derivative ought in the service of a pure ought is passively bad.

The badness of the violation of derivative oughts is relative to the class of ought to which they are in service.

B2.4. A violation of a derivative ought in the service of a push ought is passively bad.

B2.5. A violation of a derivative ought in the service of a pull ought is passively bad.

B2.6. A violation of a derivative ought in the service of the Meta Ought is passively bad.

B2.7. A chance of a violation of a pure ought is passively bad.

It is not morally the same to have no chance for a direct experience of badness (i.e., pain), and to have some chance of it. The situation where there is a chance is worse (more bad) in its own right. The chance of any badness is also bad in the same way.

B2.8. A chance of a violation of a push ought is passively bad.

The badness of each chance of badness is relative to the badness of the condition which is chanced.

B2.9. A chance of a violation of a pull ought is passively bad.

B2.10. A chance of a violation of the Meta Ought is passively bad.

B2.11. A chance of a violation of a derivative ought in the service of a pure ought is passively bad.

B2.12. A chance of a violation of a derivative ought in the service of a push ought is passively bad.

B2.13. A chance of a violation of a derivative ought in the service of a pull ought is passively bad.

B2.14. A chance of a violation of a derivative ought in the service of the Meta Ought is passively bad.

This comprehensively concludes the categories of things which are or can be subjectively bad for a consciousness.

9. SUBJECTIVE GOODNESS DEFINED

*And for subjective goodness:*³⁸

G1. ACTIVE GOODNESS

G1.1. A fulfillment of a pure ought is actively good.

If a pure ought exists, its fulfillment means a direct experience of goodness, like an experience of pleasure, but also a direct experience of badness for its violation (the absence of which make this fulfillment better than just a direct experience of goodness itself).

G1.2. An experience of pleasure is actively good.

An experience of pleasure reveals its intrinsic property of goodness. This is separate from the Mesmeric Ought.

G1.3. A fulfillment of a pull ought is actively good.

The Mesmeric Ought and the Mesmeric Interest are pull oughts. Their fulfillment means an experience of pleasure and thus a direct goodness.

³⁸ Objective goodness is outlined later.

G2. PASSIVE GOODNESS

G2.1. A fulfillment of a push ought is passively good.

Push oughts like the Primal Ought do not furnish a direct experience of goodness for their fulfillment, and thus such fulfillment is only a passive goodness. Yet the violation of a push ought furnishes a direct experience of badness, and so such a fulfillment also implies an avoidance of that active badness, which makes such a fulfillment better than the fulfillment of an ought without such an avoidance.

G2.2. A fulfillment of the Meta Ought is passively good.

Neither the violation nor fulfillment of the Meta Ought provide direct experiences of goodness and badness, though its fulfillment is still better than other static oughts (i.e., derivative oughts) since the very existence of those other oughts is inferred by the Meta Ought.

G2.3. A fulfillment of a derivative ought in service to a pure ought is passively good.

The goodness of the fulfillment of derivative oughts is relative to the class of ought to which they are in service.

G2.4. A fulfillment of a derivative ought in service to a pull ought is passively good.

G2.5. A fulfillment of a derivative ought in service to a push ought is passively good.

G2.6. A fulfillment of a derivative ought in service to the Meta Ought is passively good.

G2.7. A chance of a fulfillment of a pure ought is passively good.

It is not morally the same to have no chance for a direct experience of goodness (i.e., pleasure), and to have some chance of it. The situation where there is a chance is better (more good) in its own right. The chance of any goodness is also good in the same way.

G2.8. A chance of a fulfillment of a pull ought is passively good.

The goodness of each chance of goodness is relative to the goodness of the condition which is chanced.

G2.9. A chance of a fulfillment of a push ought is passively good.

G2.10. A chance of a fulfillment of the Meta Ought is passively good.

G2.11. A chance of a fulfillment of a derivative ought in service to a pure ought is passively good.

G2.12. A chance of a fulfillment of a derivative ought in service to a pull ought is passively good.

G2.13. A chance of a fulfillment of a derivative ought in service to a push ought is passively good.

G2.14. A chance of a fulfillment of a derivative ought in service to the Meta Ought is passively good.

This comprehensively concludes the categories of things which are or can be subjectively good for a consciousness.

10. MORAL STRANDS

An act or condition can have mixed moral qualities and/or effects, even though morals themselves (i.e., goodness and badness) are mutually exclusive. This implies an elemental and indivisible (though figurative) substance of morality, which can be bundled with a single condition or act much like individual fibers comprise a muscle.³⁹

{P10.1} A condition may occur in which there is at once both lack of actual pain (good), and a chance of an experience of pain (bad).

{P10.2} Goodness and badness are mutually exclusive. (see above)

Therefore, {P10.3} a condition may be both good and bad at once.

*An act or condition can be wholly good or bad, or of mixed moral qualities. In the latter case, we can say that such an act or condition possesses co-existing moral strands. That is, there is no cancelling-out of the good and bad which produces a net goodness or badness, but rather both persist alongside each other, registering the precise moral quality of that act or condition. **Moral Aspect** can be seen as the minor or non-dominant moral strands when of a different quality than the primary or dominant one.⁴⁰*

*For the sake of simplicity, we can refer to a good moral element as a **bon**, and a bad one as a **mal**.⁴¹ Even whilst each is a pure expression of its respective moral quality,*

³⁹ A moral element is either bad or good.

⁴⁰ Such as: 'The lollipop gave me a toothache, but had the good aspect of tasting good.'

⁴¹ Unlike Bentham's *hedons* and *dolors*, bons and mals represent discrete and unchanging quantities in the experience of goodness and badness. We take 1 bon to represent precisely the same minimal subjective experience of goodness for any consciousness, and 1 mal the same for badness.

they exist in different intensities, which one might helpfully imagine as entities of varying brightness—perhaps orange for mals, and blue for bons.

Twenty mals diluted over time are not equivalent to twenty mals concentrated into a single moment.⁴² And a lone consciousness in torment is not a morally equivalent condition to numerous consciousnesses experiencing a mild discomfort, even if the total mals in each case is the same.⁴³

Though all feeling is experienced within the consciousness, distinct pains and pleasures may give the sensation of originating in a particular part of the organism attached to such a consciousness (such as the feeling of a hurt finger, or hurt knee). We can use the word **node** to refer to the smallest discernible locus of feeling (that is, such a feeling may be reduced in intensity or duration, but not further in scope—like the smallest pin-prick), and **percept**⁴⁴ to refer to the smallest discernible present moment of experience for a particular consciousness (wherein a feeling may be reduced only in intensity or scope, but not further in sense of time).⁴⁵

11. SCALE OF PAIN

Pain exists in several forms: nociceptive pain, neuropathic pain, nociplastic pain, psychogenic pain, and emotional pain.⁴⁶ We are interested in the conscious experience of pain, and hence make no distinction between these types; the principal matter is that pain exists, and it is bad for a consciousness to experience it.

The McGill Pain Index identifies twenty distinct expressions of pain in humans:

- 1 Flickering, Pulsing, Quivering, Throbbing, Beating, Pounding
- 2 Jumping, Flashing, Shooting
- 3 Pricking, Boring, Drilling, Stabbing
- 4 Sharp, Cutting, Lacerating
- 5 Pinching, Pressing, Gnawing, Cramping, Crushing
- 6 Tugging, Pulling, Wrenching
- 7 Hot, Burning, Scalding, Searing
- 8 Tingling, Itchy, Smarting, Stinging
- 9 Dull, Sore, Hurting, Aching, Heavy
- 10 Tender, Taut (tight), Rasping, Splitting
- 11 Tiring, Exhausting
- 12 Sickening, Suffocating

⁴² That is, twenty distinct experiences of one mal, versus one experience of twenty mals.

⁴³ A good metaphor for this is furnished by thinking of holes in the ground, or mounds of dirt, with a mal being a distinct hole, and a bon a distinct hill, respectively. If the goal is to avoid badness overall (depth), then it is better to have a million holes only 1 mm deep than one hole that is a kilometer deep – even if the cubic volume (nominal badness, or number of mals) of all the holes remains the same in both scenarios. One million dollars can have quite a different significance on a per-consciousness basis when in possession of one particular consciousness vs. diluted equally among one billion consciousnesses.

⁴⁴ Or *specious present*.

⁴⁵ The objective length of a percept will differ between some species, and perhaps even between all consciousnesses; one minute to a mouse might feel very different than one minute to a dolphin, and an hour to a toddler might feel quite different than an hour to that same person in old age.

⁴⁶ And perhaps others in different consciousnesses.

- 13 Fearful, Frightful, Terrifying
- 14 Punishing, Grueling, Cruel, Vicious, Killing
- 15 Wretched, Blinding
- 16 Annoying, Troublesome, Miserable, Intense, Unbearable
- 17 Spreading, Radiating, Penetrating, Piercing
- 18 Tight, Numb, Squeezing, Drawing, Tearing
- 19 Cool, Cold, Freezing
- 20 Nagging, Nauseating, Agonizing, Dreadful, Torturing

Mental pains include forms like anger, anxiety, depression, sadness, frustration, disappointment, terror, humiliation, and jealousy, among others, in all their various degrees (such as ‘annoyance’ being on the same spectrum as ‘rage’). They are all colloquially characterized as ‘unpleasant’, yet they are worse than merely calm (which is also literally not pleasant: the absence of both pleasure and pain).

In medicine, a 0-10 scale of pain is often used to gauge pain in patients. We shall make a scale too, though from 0-100, wherein each score on the 0-10 scale is multiplied by ten. Any feeling can be viewed by how much attention it involuntarily consumes, or how much distractedness it induces. On our scale, 1 will represent barely discernible pain (0.1 on the medical scale), and 100 will represent maximum pain (10 on the medical scale).

Next we shall determine how much worse 100 (maximum possible pain) is than 1 (minimally discernible pain) to a consciousness.⁴⁷ We estimate this by imagining a trade-off: the number of seconds of minimal pain that one would willingly endure (some barely-felt mental or physical discomfort which is probably the ordinary state of being for most anyway) in order to avoid even one full second of consummate mental and physical torture.

It is safe to presume that the vast majority of human beings would prefer to indefinitely postpone one second of such excruciating and traumatizing pain, particularly when the alternative is only trivially distinct (if at all) from the ordinary experience of life in the first place. This in effect means that one full second of maximum pain is as bad or even worse than an entire lifetime of minimal pain. This also highlights the fact that we live life only one percept at a time, and thus the cumulative force of billions of seconds of minimal pain—though immense in total—is sufficiently diluted in the ongoing conscious experience to be dwarfed by the danger of just one second of maximum pain.

Yet to be conservative and account for those who would make the trade-off at some unknown point, we shall instead use the half-life of a person instead of a full lifetime. The median age for people living in the world today is 36 years according to the World Health Organization. So if this tradeoff were made at such time, affecting the remainder of one’s lifespan, then maximum pain is over a billion times worse than minimum pain.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Note that this comparison does not suggest that similar *stimuli* will necessarily evoke similar experiences of pain in different consciousnesses.

⁴⁸ 1,136,073,600 seconds in 36 years—half of the WHO-reported global human lifespan of 72 years.

Here we list the different levels of our pain scale, along with the descriptions from the corresponding levels of a medical pain scale.^{49 50} We continue with the trade-offs, in order to determine the relative badness that each successive experience of pain constitutes for a consciousness.

Level 100 pain

‘Pain level [one hundred] means unimaginable pain. This pain level is so intense you will go unconscious shortly. Most people have never experienced this level of pain. Those who have suffered a severe accident, such as a crushed hand, and lost consciousness as a result of the pain and not blood loss, have experienced level 100.’

Level 90 pain

‘Pain level [ninety] is excruciating pain, so intense you cannot tolerate it and demand pain killers or surgery, no matter what the side effects or risk. If this doesn't work, suicide is frequent since there is no more joy in life whatsoever. Comparable to throat cancer.’

A truly horrible ordeal. Yet if it meant avoiding one second of the worst possible mental or physical tortures, one might willingly take on two to four seconds of level 90 pain—but probably not much more than that, since it is still so bad in its own right.

Level 80 pain

‘Pain level [eighty] is horrible pain. The pain you feel is so intense you can no longer think clearly at all, and have often undergone severe personality change if the pain has been present for a long time. Suicide is frequently contemplated and sometimes tried. Comparable to childbirth or a real bad migraine headache.’

Likewise, it seems one might trade 2-4 seconds of this pain for one second of level 90 pain. Psychologically, this could be equivalent to the acute grief of the death of a loved one (human or animal).

Level 70 pain

‘Pain level [seventy] consists of very intense pain. Much the same as level sixty except the pain completely dominates your senses, causing you to think unclearly about half the time. At this point you are effectively disabled and frequently cannot live alone. Comparable to an average migraine headache.’

⁴⁹ The numbers 1-10 in the descriptive text have been multiplied by ten in order to synchronize with those in our pain scale, to prevent confusion.

⁵⁰ Pain Scale Chart: 1 to 10 Levels, <https://www.disabled-world.com/health/pain/scale.php>

The tradeoff of 2-4 seconds is still holding. A migraine is a distracting pain with a strong manifestation of the Primal Ought. Yet according to our subsequent tradeoffs, it is only about 1/25th (or 4%) as bad as maximum pain. This means that it would take at least twenty-five seconds of an unrelenting migraine headache to equate to the suffering of one second of absolute pain.

Level 60 pain

‘Pain level [sixty] is an intense pain that is strong, deep and piercing. The pain is so strong it seems to partially dominate your senses, causing you to think somewhat unclearly. At this point you begin to have trouble holding a job or maintaining normal social relationships. Comparable to a bad non-migraine headache combined with several bee stings, or a bad back pain.’

As the overall intensity of pain decreases, and one is able to function in spite of it, one is correspondingly able to tolerate more of it, and thus might be also willing to do so in order to avoid a more debilitating and intense pain. So a 2-6 second tradeoff is reasonable against a level 70 pain.

Level 50 pain

‘Pain level [fifty] is a very distressing strong, deep, piercing pain, such as a sprained ankle when you stand on it wrong or mild back pain. Not only do you notice the pain all the time, you are now so preoccupied with managing it that your normal lifestyle is curtailed. Temporary personality disorders are frequent.’

Pain level 50 is the putative half of pain level 100, as numbers go, yet clearly pain level 100 is far more than twice as bad as pain level 50. The few second tradeoff is starting to spread out, but still generally holds. Compiling the successive tradeoffs indicates that level 50 pain is about 1/500th (a fifth of 1%) as bad as maximum pain as we have very conservatively estimated. That is, the pain of pressure put on a sprained ankle for just under ten minutes is roughly equivalent to one second of experiencing being flayed alive while simultaneously contemplating the same happening to one’s most beloved (for example). Apologies for that glimpse of that hell, though it is necessary to underline how much worse level 100 is to level 50, which is also very bad itself.

Level 40 pain

‘Pain level [forty] is a distressing strong and deep pain, like an average toothache, the initial pain from a bee sting, or minor trauma to part of the body, such as stubbing your toe real hard. So strong you notice the pain all the time and cannot completely adapt. This pain level can be

simulated by pinching the fold of skin between the thumb and first finger with the other hand, using the fingernails, and squeezing real hard. Note how the simulated pain is initially piercing but becomes dull after that.'

It seems reasonable that one might prefer five to ten seconds of this pain in order to trade off one second of level 5 pain. Though still distractingly painful, pains at these lower levels is progressively easier to tolerate, since they consume less and less of one's full-time attention. Yet the pain of a bee sting is still tremendously more painful and bad than a minimally discernible discomfort.

Level 30 pain

'Pain level [thirty] is a tolerable, but very noticeable pain, like an accidental cut, a blow to the nose causing a bloody nose, or a doctor giving you an injection. The pain is not so strong that you cannot get used to it. Eventually, most of the time you don't notice the pain, as you have adapted to it.'

The pain at these lower levels is starting to get much less intense. Though one might pass out from the painful anxiety of a doctor's injection, the pain itself—a prick—is not usually intense. Tolerance is the key word here. The trade-off proportion still seems to hold from the level above; that a few seconds of one of these pains is equivalent to a full second of a painful toothache.

Level 20 pain

'Pain level [twenty] is discomforting minor pain, like lightly pinching the fold of skin between the thumb and first finger with the other hand, using the fingernails. People can react differently to this self-test.'

Since the descriptor is 'lightly', trying this results in what feels significantly less painful than a punch to the nose. One might trade upwards of a minute of this in exchange for a one second feeling of being cut.

Level 10 pain

'Pain level [ten] means very light barely noticeable pain, like a mosquito bite or a poison ivy itch. Most of the time you never think about the pain.'

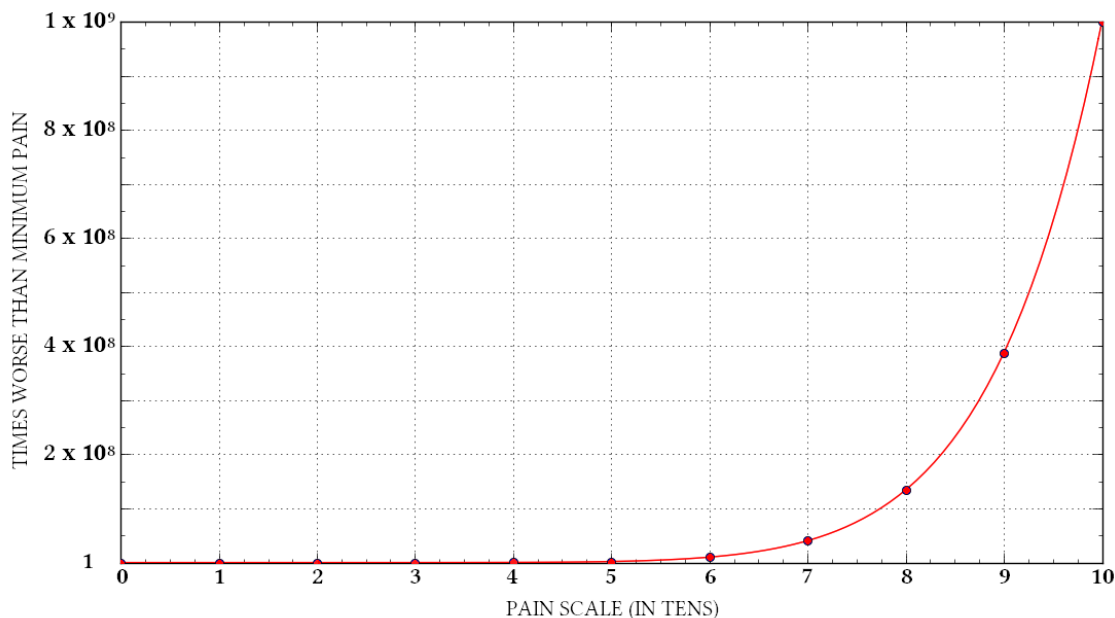
Although this pain isn't at first glance substantially less than level 20 pain, as described, one must bear in mind that one's ability to tolerate this level 10 pain is substantially greater than that of level 20. At this scale, one might trade several minutes of dull mosquito bite irritation for a single acute pinching of

sensitive skin between fingernails as described above. The difference between seconds and minutes may not seem like much at these levels of tolerable annoyance, but this could imply a difference of hundreds-fold in badness.

Level 1 pain, the smallest, would be the most trivial one could possible feel. Any less and it simply wouldn't be pain or even necessarily a feeling at all.

These estimates seem to loosely fit a power function ($y = ax^b$, 10^9 , graphed below). This is not terribly surprising as the power law applies to many phenomena in nature—from the initial mass function of stars to the ratio of an animal's metabolism to its body mass.

FIGURE 11.1



While scientific calibration of such a scale would require surveying a statistically-meaningful sampling of all consciousnesses (and not only humans), this rough calculation does reveal that even what we think of as moderate pains, while terrible, are dwarfed by maximum pain. Insofar as maximum pain is always a potential for a consciousness, it is a risk, and therefore there is a certain badness in proportion to that risk pertaining to the existence of every consciousness.

Also, since pain is bad (in a 1:1 ratio), this scale of pain is also identical to a scale of badness. Since the badness of a risk is determined by the pain that might arise over some duration times the chance of it, even a tiny chance of maximum pain results in significant badness due to the sheer degree of badness that such maximum pain entails (at least a billion times worse than nominal pain).

Just as every moment of conscious experience entails some badness due to the hovering risk of pain, so is there some goodness (though not pleasure) during every such moment equalling the difference between any badness presently being experienced (if any) and maximum badness, by the Primal Interest, in that such additional pain is being avoided.

So, if one is not experiencing any pain, one is experiencing the goodness of the fulfillment of the Primal Ought—though only in right of that particular lack of pain, which is to say in right of some particular node of feeling.

Even if some consciousnesses were experiencing pain 40 (and thus bad 40),⁵¹ they are also experiencing good 60 to the effect that it is good that such pain is not even worse: that their experience of pain is not maximal.⁵²

And yet that pain 40 generates an additional badness 40 insofar that the goodness 40 has been subverted,⁵³ and yet another badness 40 in that badness has been promoted to that extent. Along with the goodness that exists in light of there being no pain, there is also some badness that there is a risk of it, in proportion to such risk.

Other factors must also be considered, such as any risk formed that such pain will persist or worsen rather than be alleviated quickly, plus the badness from anxiety about such a risk (which are both separate from the badness of the experience of pain itself), and any further subverted goodness via opportunity costs. Even a small instance of trivial pain, then, can quickly multiply into significant badness.

Similar symmetries arise in other areas; for every risk of pain, it is good that such risk is not worse. For every lack of risk, it is good that there is no such risk. Since this relates to every instance of morals in every node of every consciousness in every percept, the true amounts are beyond any accounting.

12. MORAL UNITS

Imagine hitting one of your fingers with a hammer. That kind of pain concentrated into one moment is not the same type of experience as that same pain diluted over the course of an hour, so that there are far more moments with pain, but less pain during each moment.

A **mal-percept** (*mp*, or **bon-percept**, *bp*) is a unit that can be used to represent the intensity of a badness or goodness.⁵⁴ Further precision could make use of how many nodes are affected; so that 10*mp* in one node is of similar intensity to a consciousness as 1*mp* in ten nodes simultaneously.

If a perfect pain-recording machine existed, it would be plotting graphs from 0 to max *mals* and *bons* for the total conscious experience over time,⁵⁵ and in a parallel fashion

⁵¹ Normally this would be expressed in *mals*, though scales in this section have been kept the same as in the chart in order to simplify direct comparisons.

⁵² A consciousness in a state of pure calm is at least experiencing goodness 100 for every node that is not in a state of maximum pain; this goodness retreats on a one-to-one basis for every *mal* being experienced. So a consciousness with pain 5 (and thus badness 5) is still also experiencing good 95 in that such pain could be that much worse yet is not.

⁵³ By violation of the Meta Ought, that goodness ought to exist, and badness ought not exist.

⁵⁴ This is mostly relevant to a direct experience of badness or goodness, namely pain and pleasure, though it can be used for abstract experiences of these moral qualities as well. 1000 *mals* of risk of snakebite is quite different if it is imposed as 1000*mp* (intense risk in a single percept) versus 5*mp* (nominal risk over a longer period).

⁵⁵ Two separate graphs for *mals* and *bons* experienced respectively, and not merely a net value.

be recording in three dimensions the locations and relative intensities of the affected nodes.

Clearly such a machine does not exist, though in understanding these principles we are better prepared to make more valid comparisons between moral experiences and the distinct consciousnesses that have them.

13. SCALES OF PLEASURE

Unlike with pain, for which there is a 1:1 relationship with badness, pleasure requires a slightly different approach. Pleasure, after all, while the most direct good, is not necessarily the highest one. We know that maximum goodness is furnished at least by the maximum of anti-pain; that is, the complete fulfillment of the Primal Ought with respect to maximum pain. Assessing whether the fulfillment of the Mesmeric Ought (maximum pleasure) is equivalent requires a head-to-head comparison of pain and pleasure themselves.⁵⁶

While there are many different pain scales used in clinical environments, there do not seem to be any corresponding pleasure scales. If any exist, they are elusive. The subjective nature of pain and pleasure may make it impossible to float any viable candidate for say, the number of seconds of maximum pleasure that are sufficient compensation for one second of maximum pain. There is also the confounding issue of what possible pain or pleasure could mean in this context. Are we speaking about the maximum pain or pleasure a particular consciousness is capable of feeling, or some theoretical maximum even beyond this—one which would equalize pain and pleasure by definition?

One way to approach this is to imagine that a deity will impose on you one full second of maximum pain you have ever felt, with the full intensity of torture that implies. Yet this deity will also give you as many seconds of the most intense pleasure you have ever felt as you deem fair compensation for that experience of pain. We'll presume this deity can read minds, and if it senses you being greedy instead of fair, will give you the pain without any pleasure at all.

If posed to all of humanity, this question would likely bring wide disagreement about whether only one second of pleasure is just compensation, or whether two or more would be required. It might be easier to look at the problem in the opposite direction: what is the highest level of pain (from our pain scale, above) that would be fairly endurable for one minute in exchange for one minute of the maximum pleasure you have ever felt?

It seems, going down the list, that somewhere between a 70 and 80 would probably be the least controversial tradeoff. To be conservative (which in this case means erring on

⁵⁶ Note that this is not a question of whether maximum goodness and maximum badness are of the same intensity—they are by definition being the opposing sides of any ought—but whether maximum pleasure is analogous to maximum pain on such a scale. At first glance we can say that since pain is bad, maximum pain is maximally bad, and since pleasure is good, maximum pleasure is maximally good. It might be a mistake though to presuppose an exact symmetry between the intensities of maximum pain and maximum pleasure in the direct value they impose on a consciousness, so this is tested before proceeding.

the side of less greedy), we will go with 80. As a reminder, level 80 pain '...is horrible pain. The pain you feel is so intense you can no longer think clearly at all, and have often undergone severe personality change if the pain has been present for a long time. Suicide is frequently contemplated and sometimes tried. Comparable to childbirth or a real bad migraine headache'. This would mean one minute of a sublime orgasm would equate to one minute of the worst migraine. Each is distracting enough to hold one's undivided attention, though neither is apt to be a feeling of such intensity to be life changing, like the trauma of an untreated crushed hand.

According to the tradeoffs between level 80 pain, level 90 pain, and level 100 pain, a fair trade for one minute of maximum pain would thus be about seven-and-a-half minutes of maximum pleasure. This implies that maximum pain may be roughly 7.5 times more bad than maximum pleasure is good.⁵⁷

Yet pleasure, while good, does not necessarily generate only good strands, since the morality of the whole pleasure-experience⁵⁸ must always be determined in reference to the pain it costs or might create or risk elsewhere. Its moral quality is always contingent on its cost in pain or the risk of it,⁵⁹ just as a whole pain-experience may sometimes produce benefits.

There are also the problems, at least in human beings, of reward sensitization, addiction, and long-term potentiation of pain. Reward sensitization means that we can become sensitized to a pleasure and therefore require more of the stimulus to achieve the same effect. Since pleasure often arises only by way of some cost in pain, and pain often acts in the reverse manner (via long-term potentiation, a specific stimulus may actually invoke more pain rather than less over repeated experiences), this means that a pleasure can become exponentially less efficient over time.

Addiction—the erosion or complete loss of the freedom to abstain from a pleasure—brings about further badness, most directly in pains induced by a longing for such pleasure, and by the suppression of rational risk-avoidance (and thus the Primal Interest) in its pursuit.

14. VALUE

With the listing of all subjective goodnesses and badnesses we see that value, or the valence of experience, is entirely wrapped up in these direct experiences of pain and pleasure and the oughts that emanate from them.

A sunset or a jewel is valuable for the pleasure it brings or the utility towards a pleasure or pain reduction that it furnishes; food is valuable not only in the pleasure it produces in taste but in the pains of hunger it prevents and eliminates; money represents instrumental credit towards the acquisition of some hoped-for relief or boon; and the loss of something valuable means to lose something that grants or at least

⁵⁷ These numbers are all subjective estimates, necessary due to the lack of any known studies which have yet nailed down such metrics in a more objective and scientific way. Hopefully such research will tackle this problem and thus enable more precise moral comparisons and calculations.

⁵⁸ A **Moral Occasion** is the whole moral experience, encompassing all of the certain causes and certain effects of a specific moral experience.

⁵⁹ Minimally at the cost and risk of existence. See the later section about *Birth*. It is also worth noting that a longing for pleasure can manifest as a kind of pain in itself.

*births new chances for pleasure, and/or reduces or eliminates pains or the risk of them, or provides opportunities for the same.*⁶⁰

Experience itself—of which sentient life is a series—is still subject to massive values in goodness or badness even when it is without any particular feeling, insofar as it is being deprived of both pain (good) and pleasure (bad), and to the extent that the risk or chance of either pertain. Colloquially speaking, a valuable experience is one bountiful with goodness or the increased prospect of it. But a horrible experience without any such upside is valuable too, albeit one of negative value.

In other words, all value is moral value—not only ultimately, but altogether and at all times, and as such, can only exist in relation to one or more consciousnesses.

15. THE SPHERE OF EXPERIENCE

*You experience everything in the present time. Even your memories and thoughts about the past and future, however accurate or imperfect they may be, are experienced in the present time. We can imagine a sphere representing the present as you experience it.*⁶¹
Picture what it looks like in your mind: three dimensional and round, in wireframe. There are lines circling the sphere at even intervals and intersecting like latitude and longitude do on a globe.

The north pole on this Sphere is a single point representing the maximum pleasure you can possibly feel. The south pole represents the maximum pain you can possibly feel. The very center of the sphere represents a state of pure calm. We can call this your Sphere of Experience. Every feeling you can possibly feel—in whatever quality or intensity or uniqueness—can be mapped somewhere within it. The infinite points of the Sphere are capable of representing every possible feeling of every possible node of your consciousness from one percept to the next.

*Outside of your Sphere is nothingness. Non-existence as far as your feelings go. A black void in every direction of total numbness and irrelevance—a void that is an increasingly attractive alternative as one sinks downward into the lower pain hemisphere.*⁶²

Yet in reality outside of your own Sphere there is a whole universe of other Spheres of Experience—one for every consciousness that presently exists anywhere, regardless of what species label we affix to the body it resides in. Countless Spheres of Experience so vast in their trillions that they would appear like constellations of bright stars in the dark night sky.

⁶⁰ Happiness is an experience of pleasure, though not all experiences of pleasure constitute happiness.

⁶¹ Technically a mathematical solid ball.

⁶² It is of no objective import whether the medium of a consciousness is an organic body or an 'experience machine', except to the extent that other consciousnesses are affected. Even in that case, it is still of no subjective importance whatever to the consciousness itself. Dreams are in many ways similar to experience machines, yet they can still furnish passive goodness and badness by the chance or risk of the active goodness and badness of pleasures and pains experienced within them (these can also extend to the waking states when one has a chance or risk of a good dream or a nightmare respectively).

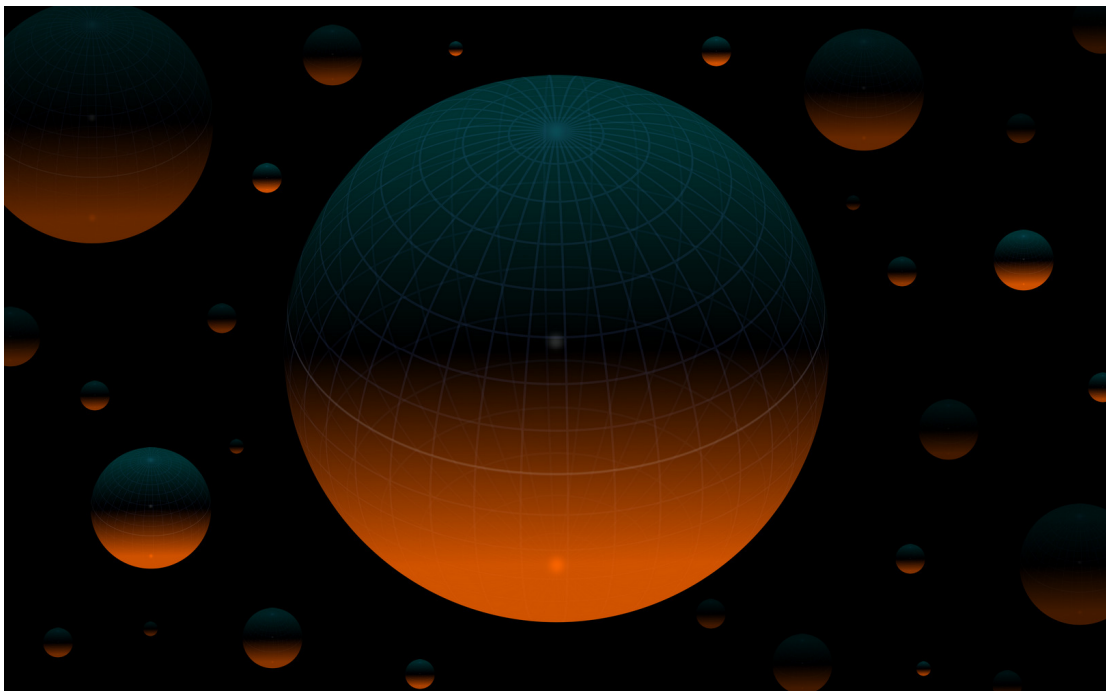
In addition to the Sphere of Experience, we can posit a Sphere of Value—where the north pole is not maximum pleasure, but maximum goodness, and the south pole is not maximum pain, but maximum badness.⁶³ In this latter Sphere we can map not only immediate pains and pleasures, but also the full moral spectrum, including risks and potentials.

Either of these Spheres can represent more than a lone consciousness: any particular node; any sized group of them (such as a whole arm); a group of persons or even all individual members of a species; all consciousnesses on a planet; all consciousnesses in general.

As with moral strands, such Spheres are not to be taken literally, but as models they can help us to visualize the experiences and vulnerabilities of consciousnesses.

The illustration below shows the pain region as seven-and-a-half times brighter than that of pleasure within each Sphere, to represent the correspondingly greater severity of maximum pain to maximum pleasure.

FIGURE 15.1



Some of those Spheres of Experience belong to your loved ones—some to strangers you see as you go about your day, and some you will never meet; some of them to animals now waiting in factory farms for their slaughter, or making their way in the wild. There is a certain fundamental equality of all consciousness when conceived in this state, each of us imprisoned within our own endocosm of vulnerability.

⁶³ While the south pole would also represent maximum badness indirectly (since there is a 1:1 ratio between them), maximum pleasure would only be roughly 13.3% of the way from the center to the north goodness pole, according to our estimates (1/7.5x).

Again picture your own Sphere; let's say that you now have a small pain in your knee, and this appears as a small cluster of orange light points slightly in the southern (pain) hemisphere. At the same time you are listening to your favorite song, and this appears as a small cluster of blue light points in the northern (pleasure) hemisphere. The centers of these two clusters are not the same distance from the center if your enjoyment of the music is more intense than the slight pain in your knee, or vice-versa.

If we can know the average of all the coordinates of all your points of feeling in a given moment, we can know how you are feeling overall. Since the present moment is always changing, so are your points of feeling. Sharp changes in the intensity of a point—which is to say its vertical movement—can dramatically affect the overall average and hence the flavor of your overall mood. Imagine the sight of your Sphere: discernible by its grey wireframe outline; inside tiny points of light are flashing around representing every possible physical and mental feeling you are experiencing in every percept over time, precisely mapped in three dimensions. They are not evenly distributed, but bunched in various parts of the Sphere in adjoining nodes, with outliers here and there. As moments pass, the clusters seem to drift and flow, form and dissipate like clouds.

There is also a kind of inexorable gravity exerting a downward pull on all points throughout the whole Sphere at all times, towards the maximum pain pole. Our bodies use different forms of continually renewing pain to coerce our conscious obedience to various 'voluntary' acts: to drink, to eat, to excrete, to shift in position, to sneeze, to cough, to sleep; each command, once satisfied, is destined to soon reappear, digging its spurs into our consciousness to compel compliance.

We can imagine one's clearest capacity for reason, if any, as ideally seated at the center of the Sphere, though in fact tenuously seated at the average center of all present points—and it is increasingly distorted as one approaches either pole where it disappears altogether. That is to say, our sole faculty for dealing with our interests in a logical cause-effect manner vanishes in situations where it is most needed. The extreme polarity of the Sphere exerts a chaotic influence on our compass of reason just like the poles of a magnet defeat a compass needle.

Spurious Life Self-Assessments

The Sphere of Value helps to illustrate the spuriousness of life self-assessments. Though one's mood moment-to-moment is apparent enough (being as it is a raw experience arising from the weighted average of all of one's present percepts), even a perfect and complete memory of all of one's previous percepts would itself be experienced through the confounding Sphere of one's present percept, and would necessitate the accurate averaging, as it were, of the innumerable three-dimensional coordinates of every percept over a lifetime.⁶⁴ Even were this feat achievable, such an average would not suffice to address the more extreme experiences of great pains and pleasures which would get superficially paved over in such an appraisal. And, as

⁶⁴ And not just the two dimensions of north-south/pain-pleasure; after all, it is the positioning of these figurative points on the lateral and longitudinal axes which determines which specific kind of positive or negative mood one is experiencing at a given time.

alluded to before, experiences of this kind are more morally important than similar moral quantities when diluted over longer periods.⁶⁵

One could at best determine only that one's presently-experienced life is or is not better than oblivion; of course, one is still wholly ignorant of one's future life experiences. The worst thing that has ever happened to you hasn't necessarily happened yet. As long as one is living, irrespective of how good one thought one had it up to a given point, one yet could become the unluckiest sentient being to ever exist.⁶⁶

16. DERIVATIVE INTERESTS

A **derivative interest** is that formed in service to the morality previously described. In effect, it is any activity in service to a derivative ought. The painful efforts of growing food, for example, are derivative to the end of eating, which in turn is primary to the end of preventing the pains of starvation. Caution should be exercised regarding derivative interests too tenuously connected with moral goals, since this can lead to unnecessary pain and risk without sufficient benefit.

To use the Sphere of Value metaphor, a derivative interest sometimes entails a calculated mission into the badness hemisphere in order to prevent an even deeper (and/or longer) stay in it.

17. BEING AND KNOWING

Since derivative interests are based on knowledge, it is useful to ask: what exists, and how do we know it? Knowledge is not just justified true belief, it is a truth first, which is then justified and then in consequence believed⁶⁷ on that basis and only on that basis, and always in that order.⁶⁸

Feeling is the most direct truth. In this sense, an experience of pain is justified true belief on steroids. This does not mean that emotions signal the truth of various thoughts and propositions, but that the raw experience of feeling is intrinsically true. If you feel pain or pleasure, there can be no confusion about that, even if there can be a

⁶⁵ The sum of pleasure experienced over long years of a favorite hobby would erode away the pain and trauma of a massive stroke (in this accounting), in a way at odds with how consciousness is really experienced; a life with many radical ups and downs could be falsely reckoned as indistinguishable in a summarized average from one that was entirely monotonous.

⁶⁶ The luckiest is probably one that dies without pain, and quickly, experiencing only joy during its brief existence lived without attachment. Hence that particular distinction seems far less likely for one old enough to read this paper.

⁶⁷ An unjustified belief cannot become a justified belief, since a whole belief always encompasses its justification if it has any. An unjustified belief in x is not just a belief in x, but a belief (in x because y), with y being an insufficient or faulty justification—even if that is simply a whim. If the same person gains real justification (z) for believing x to be true, and x is true, then that is the new belief (in x because z), displacing (in x because y). If one later forgets z though still believes x, then it is no longer knowledge, but yet a new belief (in x because undefined z).

⁶⁸ To believe one has justification for a belief that person A is in the room with you because you see their twin sibling is to be deceived, even if the proposition is itself true (person A in reality being behind you). In this case, one gains the belief because of faulty justification, and the truth is not causally connected to the belief.

lot of confusion as to why you feel it, or how long it may last and so forth. Yet being convinced of a belief does not in any sense add justification for it. The justification in the case of a feeling is its direct experience, and it is that experience which justifies. Unfortunately the set of all true things and the set of convincing things do not by necessity overlap, except where we can feel or reason from those feelings.⁶⁹

Experience is a phenomenon distinct from matter and energy. Unlike those two, experience can be created and destroyed,⁷⁰ as can value itself, which is a quality of experience. Another quality of experience is information, which can likewise be created and destroyed.⁷¹

18. CAUSATION

{P18.1} The cause of a condition compels its occurrence.

The moral quality of a condition is transitive to the cause of such condition. Note that this does not refer to intention; rather it means that (for example) the cause of pain is morally contiguous with the consequent condition of pain.

{P18.2} The cause of a moral condition (i.e., **the cause** as a noun) retains that inherited moral attribute even when viewed as a verb (i.e., **to cause**).⁷²

Getting stabbed is painful, which is bad. The cause of that condition of being stabbed (the stabbing itself, in that it compels the painful condition) is also bad. The action aspect of that cause—that is, the bringing of that cause into existence, is likewise contiguous with this badness, as is the causal agent, since each is uniquely in violation of the Primal Ought.⁷³ There is no moral distinction between proximate and distal causes;⁷⁴ all such causes are bad if they violate an ought, and good if they fulfill it, no matter how remote in the causal chain.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ We can perceive reality through our senses too, though such senses are not reliable in the same way that feeling pain is reliably bad; such sensory perceptions are not by necessity true.

⁷⁰ Sensory impressions constitute real-time information (creation and destruction instantaneously, for instance the information generated and mostly forgotten as one's gaze moves across a landscape).

⁷¹ When a Polaroid photograph is destroyed, its matter is not truly destroyed but converted to other forms. The information of the photograph however is utterly gone, and is not conserved anymore than it can be quantified except by the value such a destruction imposes on one or more consciousnesses.

⁷² The foundational oughts do not make demands only upon consciousnesses, but upon everything. If I ought not experience pain, then anything causing me pain is in violation of that ought.

⁷³ That all of these are subjectively bad is clear from the perspective of the victim's subjective morality only; see the section on objective morals later as well.

⁷⁴ Though there still can be usefulness in distinguishing proximate and distal causes, particularly when moral agency is involved.

⁷⁵ For example, a gust of wind against the back of a car which is already destined to strike a pedestrian. The gust is only bad if it increases that badness otherwise in the works and thus violates an ought (or causes a new badness, or increases the chance of it).

19. THE WILL

We have seen that laws we take for granted in the physical world do not by necessity pertain to the consciousness. Consciousness is an emergent process constituting experience and its qualities of value and information, both of which can be created and destroyed without their conservation as converted properties or attributes.⁷⁶ To the degree that consciousness can be conceived not only as a process but as an entity, it is not a physics chamber, it is an information chamber and a value chamber.⁷⁷ By these differences physical causation differs to conceptual causation. With the will, it is conceptual causation that is occurring.

*Something can be less voluntary than it seems, but not moreso. That is, while you could possibly be deceived about whether an apparently voluntary action is truly free, you cannot be deceived about having willful input into something that is involuntary. That is because of the existence of willful energy, which we shall call **vim**.*

Vim is the resource of the consciousness which is the crux of every ought. To focus and choose is to expend vim; a motion performed by your body which was not conceptually caused by an expenditure of your vim is not within your moral responsibility. The purchase, so to speak, with vim of some act is to be the agent of that act. To spend vim is the very act of deliberateness. As such, one can never be mistaken about doing so, though one may be mistaken in doing so.⁷⁸

One might also doubt whether one's expenditure of vim is actually free, or at least free enough to properly adhere to oughts,⁷⁹ given how constrained our decisions and opportunities can be by circumstances beyond our apparent control. For an event to happen without our expenditure of vim means that event was certainly not freely chosen or chosen at all. In the comparatively narrow scope of apparent freedom which evokes itself on all other occasions, are we no less subjugated to involuntary forces?

The answer to that question depends on the nature of needs and wants, in particular whether needs and wants are ultimately coercive or whether they are merely prompts.⁸⁰ If they are prompts and not coercive, then our apparent freedom to expend vim as we choose is genuine freedom. If they are coercive, then the scope of this freedom is curtailed massively though still not wholly refuted.⁸¹

⁷⁶ A perfect recording of the brain state at a given moment is ultimately a description not an experience, and consciousness is an experience.

⁷⁷ This is not to suggest a supernatural element to the consciousness, nor to the mechanisms of the brain, but rather to say that at the moment the first feeling was ever felt in the universe, a new stratum above the unfeeling and unfelt emerged. And the first time vim was expended toward an intention, yet another stratum above that one, this time with causal unpredictability occurring at its interface with the lower strata, to the extent and degree that such vim was summoned and directed.

⁷⁸ During the experience of the moment, at least. Memory is another matter, and is not necessarily reliable regarding past feelings either, despite their innate truthfulness.

⁷⁹ In any case to doubt would be an undoubted expenditure of vim, and it would be odd for evolution to create this illusory freedom only narrowly, and then expend previous vim to contradict the illusion.

⁸⁰ Needs are not just super wants; wants indeed often exist in opposition to needs and *vice-versa*.

⁸¹ Even if they are prompts, they can still be causes once chosen by vim. The vim incorporates the prompt into the causal chain, and as such, the want can be good or bad to the extent that it influences further moral effects. A prompt can cause, it just does not by necessity cause, and it would be a modal fallacy to presume that it does so on all occasions.

A coercion always has effect on an action but a prompt does not. One can have any number of ongoing wants at a given time yet act on none of them, so clearly they are not causes of action always. A want does not by necessity imply any effect except its notice. Wants, then, are prompts and not coercive. Needs are conditional to the ongoing existence of the consciousness, yet they are manifested as wants. As conditionals they are not coercive either, but also prompts. The if in these cases pertaining to whether the vim is prioritizing the goal of the need or not.

This lack of necessity breaks the chain of serial coercions and in this gap is volition, even if this volition is still a matter of degree and constrained by the qualities of judgment and opportunity.⁸²

Given at least the potential for volition, every act of a conscious organism falls into one of four categories:

	Type	Action Start	Action End	Example
1.	Opt in + opt out	Voluntary	Voluntary	Speaking
2.	Opt in only	Voluntary	Involuntary	Orgasm
3.	Opt out only ⁸³	Involuntary	Voluntary	Breathing
4.	Neither opt	Involuntary	Involuntary	Heartbeat

Agency only pertains to the opts, though morality still pertains to all of them; it is still bad if an involuntary system of the body is causing pain, even if no vim was involved in the causal chain of that pain, and no amount of vim could stop it. Indeed, that situation would be extra bad, in that the risk of its continuance would thus be greater (being invulnerable to morally-adherent vim).

Notwithstanding the above, there is a good moral reason to presume the existence of free will. If we presume that human beings are essentially automata and they really are not, we unnecessarily undertake all of the risk (and thus badness) such an abandonment of due care in the expenditure of vim that implies. If we really are automata, and there would be no extra moral downside since the decision to act or not is beyond our control. Therefore, we should presume that humans are not automata.

20. THE OBJECTIVITY OF MORALS

An intrinsic relationship is objective, and not only subjective. The relationship between the feeling of pain and its property of badness is one such intrinsic relationship. By this principle, you can understand that pain is bad not only for you but for all who experience it; badness is always along for the ride whenever, wherever, and however pain ends up being experienced. Anyone⁸⁴ capable of experiencing pain is also subject

⁸² The difference between a prompt and a cause is so-called free will. That is the space or gap in which volition can or does occur.

⁸³ This is what Libet referred to as 'Free Won't'. Some schema of action, like drying one's hands with a towel, are practically automatic having been ingrained in memory, though they can still be halted or altered. Other pseudorandom movements—the little twitches and pats and other seeming involuntary movements of a fidgeting body (often seeming to be unconsciously experimental toward pleasure and thus goodness), can likewise be vetoed even though little to no vim was expended in their causation.

⁸⁴ Properly speaking, any consciousness is not only a *what*, but also a *who*.

then to the Primal Ought, and hence also the Primal Interest, and, by subjection to an ought and thus to good and badness, also to the Meta Ought and Meta Interest.

{P20.1} A quality that is inalienable to a feeling is intrinsic to it.

{P20.2} Badness is inalienable to any experience of pain.

Therefore, {P20.3} an experience of pain is intrinsically bad.⁸⁵

{P20.4} An intrinsic relationship is objective, and not only subjective.

Therefore, {P20.5} an experience of pain is objectively bad, and not only subjectively bad.

This is not just an inductive inference, but the nature of pain itself. A consciousness' experience of the Primal Ought, by pain, proves that this Primal Ought exists for other consciousnesses in their experience of pain too if they have any.⁸⁶

That is, an arbitrary feeling of pain experienced by oneself is just as bad when another consciousness experiences it, and vice-versa, even if the particular stimulus required to evoke that pain differs.

The same goes for pleasure, in that it is intrinsically good and thus objectively good. A feeling of pleasure has the property of being unquestionably good for any and every consciousness that experiences it, even if (again) the specific stimulus to evoke it differs, and even if the wider experience, taking into full account the costs and reverberating consequences (in badness) of that pleasure are not worth undertaking.⁸⁷

An objective rather than a purely subjective Primal Ought refutes moral nihilism: a moral property does exist outside of opinion. Note this does not state that pain itself is objective, as though the pain of one is felt by all. Rather, it says that the pain of any consciousness is bad in the same way as it would be to any other consciousness were the latter to experience it instead. A point in the pain hemisphere of multiple Spheres of Experience will be bad for all such consciousnesses.

Thus it is objectively worse if consciousness A experiences maximum pain than if consciousness B experiences minimum pain, even if the latter is me and I naturally find the little pain I do feel to be subjectively worse than someone else's severe pain that I do not feel. Pain is not somehow less bad just because someone else's consciousness is experiencing it instead of oneself.

The objectification of the Primal Ought (and its implications) takes morality beyond empathy and personal self-interest.⁸⁸ It means that even if the population of

⁸⁵ This is justified by the nature of pain, every experience of which is bad.

⁸⁶ Otherwise, they are not experiencing pain.

⁸⁷ When speaking of the common objective value of some arbitrary pain or pleasure, one must bear in mind that this does not imply that every consciousness is capable of every variety or intensity of pain or pleasure, but only that to know if such a feeling is pain or pleasure is the same as knowing that it is respectively an unquestionably bad or good experience for the subject consciousness, even without actually being that subject consciousness. Such an experience of pain is not only bad for *them*, which it is, but bad even without this qualification.

⁸⁸ This refers to empathy as popularly understood: *i.e.*, affective or somatic empathy. Cognitive empathy (the ability to understand another's state of mind, even if in an emotionally detached way) would be necessary to make a sound assessment about whether another consciousness is experiencing pain, calm, or pleasure. At least some proportion of persons with personality disorders characterized by a lack of affective or somatic empathy still possess cognitive empathy.

consciousnesses in the whole universe were to cease to exist except for just one - and that one consciousness suffered pain, then it would still be objectively bad and not just subjectively bad; such a universe would be objectively worse than a universe with a consciousness that wasn't feeling or risking anything at all.⁸⁹

Indeed, even an uncountably high number of consciousnesses enjoying supreme pleasure will not cleanse objective reality of the stain of the badness experienced by one lone consciousness in torment.

21. MORAL SUBJECTS AND OBJECTS

A consciousness subject to a specific instance of feeling is the subject of that moral circumstance. The cause of that moral circumstance is its object. That is, it creates the moral experience, while not itself experiencing it.⁹⁰ The object is outside (or objective to) the subjective experience, though still connected to it.⁹¹

We can think of this as an objective scorecard for every causation which has ever affected a consciousness, tallying the cumulative goodness and badness to which it has ever subjected a consciousness.

A rock falling on the head of an animal and resulting in great pain and thus badness is not the subject of badness, but the object of badness. That is, as the cause of badness subjectively imposed, it is in that same degree objectively bad. Badness is transitive to its proximate cause, and this also includes the agent (if any, conscious or not) of that cause—such as a gust of wind that dislodged the rock, or the bird that accidentally dropped it.⁹²

This does not mean that the rock, gust of wind, or bird are morally responsible for this badness, but they are nonetheless ascribed with the objective badness which their existence in the causal chain fostered, which at minimum denotes a dangerousness. Though any sharp knife is the object of the badness of risk it poses to those who might be sliced by it, a knife which has actually been used by a serial killer to torture and kill dozens of people (or by a butcher to slaughter dozens of non-human animals) has an objective moral valuation much worse than an unused knife, since it has been the

⁸⁹ Ascribing value to the universe at all ('worse') implies morals and thus the existence of consciousnesses.

⁹⁰ The pain in, say, the hand of a consciousness which strikes another, is not the same experience as the pain of the blow that the other consciousness receives.

⁹¹ This is the opposite of grammatical subjects and objects; it would likely be too confusing to refer to the subjective experience as the direct object of its objective cause (its grammatical subject). Hence we have chosen terms that correspond with the subjective and objective.

⁹² In effect, the full [proximate] cause encompasses the blow to the head (and all of the physiological implications of that resulting in conscious pain), the rock (as a necessary part of the blow), and the cause of the rock making the blow (which is also necessary; this includes gravity as the force compelling the rock on its journey to the blow). Each of these are constituent parts of the overall proximate cause of the feeling; *i.e.*, the *situation* of the rock falling on the animal's head—from the start of the situation to the end of it. Telescoping distal causes eventually include the Big Bang, though it is not clear how inevitable such a situation as a rock falling on the head of an animal was at the time the universe began, *per se*; though the existence of the universe is ultimately responsible (though not morally responsible) for all of the goodness and badness in existence, as it is (by definition) also responsible for everything else in existence.

object of vastly more badness. Being the object of badness, however, is of much greater importance when applied to ethics (the behavior of consciousnesses, particularly moral agents).⁹³

Imagine a consciousness that is subject to extreme goodness; it is constantly in a state of maximum pleasure, and is without any kind of subjectively bad experience at all (neither pain, nor risk of it—for the sake of argument). Yet this favored consciousness lashes out at other consciousnesses on a continual basis, causing great pains and thus badness for many others without experiencing any of it in turn. The moral experience of that offending consciousness is subjectively good, even while the moral value of that consciousness is objectively bad.

That is, while we can objectively know that this subjective experience is good via the objectification of morals (above), we do not yet know the justice of this fact as applied to this particular consciousness by this knowledge alone; the objective moral value of this consciousness (by means of its effects on other consciousness) is bad, even while its subjective value (to itself)⁹⁴ we can know to be good.

This gives rise not just to the condition of morality (as an experience) but to the being of morality (as an attribute), with both being objectively meaningful.⁹⁵ We already know the value of a subjective experience depends on its morality, but the objectivity of morals establishes that an object outside of one's subjective experience can also have moral value, stemming from one's own subjective experience, and that of others.

22. THE PRIMAL RIGHT

If it is bad when you experience pain, then it is bad for me to make you experience pain. Note that the personal application of the Primal Ought, viz., 'I ought not experience pain' becomes 'you ought not experience pain'. The ought extends to the cause, so if I am the cause, then I transgress the ought as the object of that badness, while the victim is the subject of that badness.

Further, if you ought not experience pain, then that is a moral duty for you to the extent it is within your choice. For me to subvert your performance of that moral duty means to subvert morality and thus transgress it. This is the foundation of ethics, the rule often expressed over the millennia as variations of the 'Golden Rule': That you have a right not to have your performance of right morals tampered with or obstructed. And that anyone who does so is in breach of objective morality.

{P22.1} No consciousness can be rightfully prevented from opposing badness and promoting goodness.⁹⁶ ← The Primal Right

⁹³ This is to suggest an enduring fact about the knife rather than guilt, or any supernatural attribute.

⁹⁴ Pain is always subjectively bad, and it is also (as shown above) objectively bad in a way that can never be discounted. Yet the objective value of a whole consciousness to other consciousnesses is quite independent of the goodness or badness of that consciousness' own subjective experiences, however objectively true and verifiable.

⁹⁵ Or to put another way, morality not just as an attribute of conditions and acts but of consciousnesses themselves and the objects that interact with them.

⁹⁶ This can also be written as: 'No consciousness should be prevented from opposing badness and promoting goodness'.

This right is called primal since no act, condition, or power can be moral (which is to say legitimate) which contradicts it.

If a person needs a bone marrow transplant, for example, they cannot coerce others into donating their bone marrow (since to do so would violate the Primal Rights of such persons to avoid pain and hence badness). Persons could however voluntarily consent to donating their bone marrow. Since they would be consenting to such pain and badness (in this case instrumental pain and a derivative interest to end greater pain in exchange for a lesser one), they have not been denied the right to avoid such badness. They have not even waived their Primal Right since they have not at any stage been prevented from exercising it in the first place.

We see then that the greater objective good does not override the Primal Right as it relates to individuals when its fulfillment requires imposing badness involuntarily upon them, or subverts goodness they may seek or enjoy. Neither does the Primal Right override objective morality, but rather is in harmony with it as one of its necessary and foundational attributes. An act which purports to be for the common good but which violates the Primal Right of one or more individual consciousnesses is in fact in breach of objective morality and thus subverts the very good it sought to advance. And by consciousness, this refers to all consciousnesses, and not only those of human beings.

This also refutes the idea of utility as applied to a group without considering each constituent (or indeed external) individual. The Primal Right indicates that it is immoral for one consciousness to be involuntarily subjected to an extreme pain in order to reduce smaller pains for a large number of other consciousnesses (let alone to furnish them with pleasures). The smaller pains of many different consciousnesses cannot be meaningfully added together in any way that takes precedence over the larger pain suffered by a lone consciousness.⁹⁷

*Since one cannot know the future, and cannot know how much pain or pleasure a stimulus will impose on a different consciousness, one must seek the **consent** of that other consciousness before undertaking an action that will likely affect them (where it is possible to do so), and in any case treat them as you would treat yourself (if you were moral to yourself).⁹⁸*

23. INTENTION

Intention refers to the anticipated effect of some prospective causation that the intending consciousness may realistically activate from their own point-of-view. As such, an intention constitutes a chance of external goodness and/or badness, and is thus a moral event in its own right (subjecting those it might affect in the form of chance/risk, with the intender as the object of that moral potential).

The amount of goodness or badness a specific intention actually comprises is a function of its moral value if successful, its subjective strength, and the realistic probability of its intended effect via such intended cause.

⁹⁷ Participation in war is wrong, as is any situation which would require or subject a consciousness to predictable violations of Primal Rights.

⁹⁸ The Primal Right justifies proportionate self-defense; indeed, survival itself can be seen as ongoing self-defense.

So, if some consciousness firmly intends to simply wish world peace into existence, the strength of their honest devotion to this end (say, 100%) must be multiplied by its real probability of occurring by this cause (~0%), times the great good that world peace would constitute (arbitrarily for purposes of this example, a trillion bons). Multiplying these together yields no chance at all of this intention being the cause of the good it aims for, and thus no chance of goodness from it is generated no matter how much goodness was thereby intended. This intention, while not conferring badness, neither confers goodness.⁹⁹

On the other hand we can imagine another consciousness that has the same strong intention for world peace (100%) and this intention includes the realistic resolution to passionately preach non-violence all over the world for many years. The probability of this successfully resulting in world peace, while extremely low, could at least be plausibly conceived as non-zero (say, a billionth of one percent), especially if the intention is modest enough to be limited to a short time-frame. Supposing that the good resulting from world peace during this modest timeframe would be a billion bons, we multiply the intent (100%, or 1.0) times its plausibility (resulting in 0.0000000001, or 1×10^{-9}) times the good it would do if successful (resulting in a goodness of this intent equal to 0.01 bons).

Note that this is goodness that is ascribed to the intended consciousness as the object of such goodness by the intention alone. The actual effects may turn out in reality to be good, bad, or indifferent, and those additionally accrue to that consciousness, regardless of intention, as the object of those effects. If this intender actually follows through on the intention to preach world peace, the actual good done by this devolves backwards to the intention as one of the distal causes of that good.

For another example, let's say that three consciousnesses act as moral objects on a fourth consciousness, with the exact same result of subjective badness to that fourth consciousness in each instance. Yet one of the object-consciousnesses had a good intention in performing the act, one had a bad intention, and one had no active intention of any particular kind. All three as objects of that subjective moral badness receive negative moral valuations from the effect itself, equally. The one with the good intention also receives a good valuation added to this in proportion to the honest and realistic expectation of a certain good result, the one with the bad intention receives a bad valuation likewise, and the one without any intention receives no further such additions of either kind.

This valuation, **moral worth**, is neither a punishment nor a reward, but simply the objective truth of how much goodness and badness a consciousness has cumulatively caused for others. No amount of future good acts can erase a past badness, nor vice-versa. A human who is an omnivore and becomes a vegan at age twenty has contributed to the unnecessary breeding, torture, and death of thousands of individual sentient beings. That immense accumulation of objective badness is a permanent fixture in the moral valuation of that new vegan, since even a further century of a plants-only diet will not ameliorate or reverse the suffering in time already experienced by the previously-harmed animals. Yet neither is the vegan adding to that badness;

⁹⁹ At least in its own right, though it may yield subjective feelings of pleasure (which are of course subjectively good), and also psychologically reinforce a mindset that tends to overall reduce that consciousness' risk to others.

there is thereby a very steep reduction in their further accumulation of such badness and negative worth.¹⁰⁰

The total moral worth of a consciousness, while it includes intention, is not limited to intention. It also takes into account the total good and bad a consciousness would create if the chances to do so were open to it, in proportion to those chances and the chances of such vim being devoted to them. For example, a consciousness that would willingly perpetuate genocide, yet never does so, nor has any specific intention to do so, has negative worth added in since the disposition of such a consciousness poses a risk for that outcome.

It should be noted here that it is not enough to simply believe oneself morally right (any more than it is enough to simply believe a wish to be effective): one must actually be morally right. Good intentions require right morals in order to be counted as such. The intended good effect(s) should actually be good. If one believes that, say, kicking animals in the head is the right thing to do, and formulates intentions based on this error, those intentions will count as bad ones, not good ones, since they constitute risks for bad effects, not chances for good effects—no matter how sincerely held is this error by the offender.

Being mindful of true morals, and cultivating good intentions stemming from them, will nourish opportunities for causing good effects, and tend to render object-goodness¹⁰¹ for the one so acting.

24. AUTHORITY

The Primal Authority is the other side of the Primal Right. We know oughts exist for every consciousness: against pain, its risk, and so forth, and that these are universal commandments to all of us within our own subjective experiences. Just as the Primal Right denies legitimacy to acts and powers which transgress subjective morals, so the **Primal Authority** confers legitimacy to acts and powers which protect such morals:¹⁰²

{P25.1} *Every consciousness can be rightfully prevented from promoting badness and subverting goodness.*

This simply re-states what is obvious in light of the previous sections: i.e., that a consciousness has no moral license (or right) to promote badness or subvert goodness, though it now has an objective posture. Namely that while every consciousness has the right not to be harmed, there is a corresponding duty never to harm. Further is the strong implication that there is moral warrant for any consciousness exercising its power to enforce the above—though this implication stops short of actually requiring such enforcement.

¹⁰⁰ At least as relates to animal consumption, providing that this vegan is not then commencing on a campaign to promote such meat-eating by others, etc.

¹⁰¹ i.e., increased moral worth.

¹⁰² 'A consciousness ought never to prevent another from opposing badness and promoting goodness' (the Primal Right) is good when fulfilled/respected, and bad when violated/disrespected. Recall that every ought has a good side (when fulfilled) and a bad side (when violated). The Primal Authority derives directly from this: that it is bad when the Primal Right is violated. Thus no such violation is justifiable.

Separately, however, the objectification of the Meta Ought furnishes a positive commission to promote goodness and subvert badness outside of oneself, in what one can call the **Primal Duty**:

{P25.2} *A consciousness ought to promote goodness and subvert badness [for others as well as itself].*

Putting these three together, it is clear that there is a duty not only to help others (i.e., after the fact of harm), but also to prevent that harm to begin with, even when it entails some coercion of the offending consciousness. An offender, already in breach of the Primal Right of another, has by way of violating that Primal Right voluntarily accepted to become subject to possible subjective badness on behalf of any morally-grounded enforcement that may ensue.¹⁰³

25. MORAL GATES

There is a duty to seek goodness and avoid badness. Yet as we have seen, goodness and badness exist both subjectively and objectively. In the latter case, this objectivity refers both to the objective reality of subjective moral states, as well as to a universal perspective of them taken altogether.

This universal perspective is the key to morals as they relate to the interaction between different consciousnesses, which is to say morality as normally defined. By objective morality, a consciousness who assaults another consciousness without provocation is the cause of badness for that victim, and in violating the victim's Primal Right, waives their own to the same extent, meaning that defensive actions taken against them (while subjectively bad) are not objectively bad in this sense of universal morality.

A Moral Gate is this occlusion which rightfully prevents the ascribing of a subjective moral condition with objective perspective.

26. OBJECTIVE BADNESS AND GOODNESS

Objective badness and goodness are determined by the same classes of oughts, in the same order, as those for subjective badness and goodness. The Primal Right, Primal Authority, and so forth, are in fact static oughts derivative to subjective morality, though to the subjective morality to all consciousnesses instead of only to one of them.

27. MORAL PRECISION

In the English language at least, there is much ambiguity regarding relative moral states. The word 'better' for example is read to mean both 'more good' and 'less bad'. 'Worse' is similarly imprecise; even 'worst' as in 'the worst-case scenario' can mean not

¹⁰³ The Primal Right only protects a consciousness' prerogative to pursue subjective and objective morality; it does not (and cannot) shield a consciousness from harms arising from its transgression of that very morality.

the true worst state with maximum badness, but merely minimal or absent goodness or pleasure. In pursuit of moral precision, the following vocabulary is adopted:

	GOOD	BAD
<i>Noun</i> ¹⁰⁴	bon	mal
<i>Adjective</i> ¹⁰⁵	bonnic	mallic
<i>Superlative (least)</i> ¹⁰⁶	bonnette	mallette
<i>Superlative (most)</i> ¹⁰⁷	bonnest	mallest
<i>Comparative (less)</i> ¹⁰⁸	bonnini	mallini
<i>Comparative (more)</i> ¹⁰⁹	bonner	maller
<i>Verb (regular, infinitive)</i> ¹¹⁰	to bon	to mal
<i>Verb (gerund)</i> ^{also 60}	bonning	mallng
<i>Noun (state)</i> ¹¹¹	bonness	mallness
<i>Agent noun</i> ¹¹²	bonnant	mallant
<i>Recipient noun</i> ^{also 62}	bonnient	mallient

Further, to distinguish movement within goodness or badness from movement overall:
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Positive: +(*x*)

*A **boon** (distinguished from benefit). Movement within goodness towards more good.*

Negative: -(*x*)

*A **bane** (distinguished from harm). Movement within badness towards more bad.*

Counterpositive: ∓(*x*)

*A **bare**; movement within goodness towards less good.*

Counternegative: ±(*x*)

*A **balm**; movement within badness towards less bad.*

¹⁰⁴ 'She was subjected to several bons.'

¹⁰⁵ 'It was a bonnic experience.'

¹⁰⁶ 'He felt bonnette. Though he felt good, if he felt any less good he wouldn't feel good at all.'

¹⁰⁷ 'The bonnest situation for the greatest number of people.'

¹⁰⁸ 'Winning a hundred dollars is bonnini to winning a thousand dollars.'

¹⁰⁹ 'Winning a thousand dollars is bonner than winning a hundred dollars.'

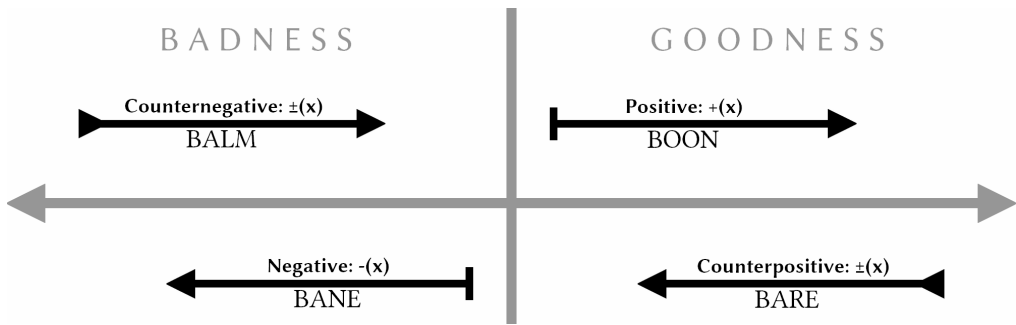
¹¹⁰ 'To bon without malling is the right goal of life.'

¹¹¹ 'The experience was saturated with bonness.'

¹¹² 'The bonnant bonned the bonnient', meaning the giver of goodness gave goodness to the experiencer of goodness.

¹¹³ A movement from pleasure to pain, for instance, would be first counterpositive (to a state of calm), then negative. The counterpositive symbol shows the negative movement (minus sign) dominating the positive (plus sign), and the counternegative symbols shows the positive movement (plus sign) dominating the negative (minus sign).

FIGURE 27.1



Although pain is always subjectively bad, and pleasure is always subjectively good, this is not always true on an objective level—such as it is not objectively good in any sense when one person sadistically murders another, even if the sadistic killer subjectively enjoys it. For this reason, it is helpful to specifically categorize and define some terms which in colloquial English are used rather more freely:

Regarding Pain

The absence of pain for a consciousness is always subjectively good, and its presence is always subjectively bad. From an objective perspective, however, the presence or lack of pain for a particular consciousness may be either justified or unjustified, and given that, different terms are useful depending on whether it is actually present or not:

	When Good by Presence ¹¹⁴	When Good by Lack ¹¹⁵
Justified Pain	Penalty	Impossible
	When Bad by Presence ¹¹⁶	When Bad by Lack ¹¹⁷
Justified Pain	Impossible	Evasion
	When Good by Presence ¹¹⁸	When Good by Lack ¹¹⁹
Unjustified Pain	Impossible	Default
	When Bad by Presence ¹²⁰	When Bad by Lack ¹²¹
Unjustified Pain	Harm	Impossible

¹¹⁴ The presence of pain when justified in a consciousness is a **penalty**. That is, it is pain which is deserved from an objective point-of-view.
¹¹⁵ Justified pain is never good by its lack. If it is justified, it is good only when present.
¹¹⁶ If pain is justified, then its presence cannot be bad (objectively speaking).
¹¹⁷ Evading justified pain (*i.e.*, a just penalty) is bad.
¹¹⁸ Unjustified pain is never good.
¹¹⁹ It is always good to lack unjustified pain.
¹²⁰ When pain is present but unjustified that is a **harm**.
¹²¹ An unjustified pain is bad only in its presence, never in its lack. Its lack is good.

Regarding Pleasure

In like wise, the presence of pleasure is always subjectively good and its absence is always subjectively bad for a consciousness. Objectively, though, it is either justified or unjustified in each particular case, to wit:

	When Good by Presence ¹²²	When Good by Lack ¹²³
Justified Pleasure	Benefit	Impossible
	When Bad by Presence ¹²⁴	When Bad by Lack ¹²⁵
Justified Pleasure	Impossible	Default
	When Good by Presence ¹²⁶	When Good by Lack ¹²⁷
Unjustified Pleasure	Impossible	Dock
	When Bad by Presence ¹²⁸	When Bad by Lack ¹²⁹
Unjustified Pleasure	Spoil	Impossible

A harm is an experience of badness which is not justified. In other words, a harm is not simply a bad experience, nor necessarily only a worsening one (from either a good or bad starting point), but one that is unjustified by any further moral implications. The pain an assailant might receive from a defensive action by their victim, for example, while subjectively bad, is not a harm. Likewise, that defensive action of the victim, even though the proximate cause of that badness, is not wrong (if proportionate). Though bad in one sense, it is justified by other moral factors.

A benefit refers to an experience of goodness which is not unjustified. By unjustified good, this refers not to goodness which is unearned in some fashion, but rather a goodness which is experienced in defiance of an occasion of justice. For example, if the defensive strike of a rape victim, instead of deterring the rape through pain or risk of it, instead resulted in incentivizing pleasure to the assailant, that would not be a benefit, but a spoil.

Though these terms are somewhat arbitrary, it is important to adopt a uniform set of words, so that these concepts may be discussed with minimum data loss or misunderstanding.

¹²² A justified pleasure is a benefit. This is also the default.

¹²³ If a pleasure is justified, then the lack of it is never good.

¹²⁴ The presence of justified pleasure is never bad.

¹²⁵ That it is bad when there is a lack of justified pleasure is the default.

¹²⁶ If pleasure is good by its presence, then it is not unjustified.

¹²⁷ If it is justified and good that a pleasure is missing, then it is a **dock**. This is a type of punishment.

¹²⁸ When pleasure is unjustified, that means it is in excess of what is deserved: a **spoil**. For while unlimited pleasure is justified on a purely subjective level, rarely is this true on an objective basis.

¹²⁹ It is not bad to lack an unjustified pleasure, objectively speaking, even if there is no such thing as an unjustified pleasure at the subjective level.

28. RESPONSIBILITY

*A **moral agent** is a consciousness sufficiently endowed with such senses and reason that it is able to understand at least some of the effects of its actions on other consciousnesses, and is able to act on that basis.¹³⁰ As such, moral agency is an attribute of degree and not just kind. Nevertheless, a consciousness may still be able to comprehend goodness or badness itself (and certainly be able to experience goodness and badness) even without being a moral agent.¹³¹*

*When one moral agent voluntarily causes badness for another consciousness,¹³² either with the purpose or expectation of doing so,¹³³ or because of reasoning or acting at a lower standard of carefulness (risk avoidance) than they would use to avert badness for themselves, then that moral agent is **culpable** of that bad consequence. That is, they are morally responsible for it.*

Likewise, a moral agent who voluntarily brings goodness into existence for another consciousness with the purpose or expectation of doing so, or because of reasoning or acting at the same or higher standard than they would use to achieve goodness for themselves¹³⁴ is morally responsible for that good consequence.

Consciousnesses can be categorized into four different types:

1. The non-dangerous and rational (normal human beings).
2. The non-dangerous and non-rational (babies, some non-human animals).
3. The dangerous and rational (psychopaths, etc.; can possibly be reasoned with).
4. The dangerous and non-rational (deranged sadists, deadly non-human animals).

A moral agent could be a member of any of these categories (from a qualitative perspective), though the maximum moral agency is likely to be found among the rational categories of (1) and (3).

¹³⁰ Meaning that consciousnesses with limited (or no) empathy are still moral agents, such as psychopaths, narcissists, and autists.

¹³¹ A consciousness may understand to some extent the goodness or badness others are experiencing, without being able to formulate a cause-effect relationship between its own actions and those external moral experiences.

¹³² Via vim, as discussed in the section on will; regardless whether that other consciousness is itself a moral agent or not.

¹³³ One might expect a certain outcome from a prospective act even without intending that outcome.

¹³⁴ By *lower or higher standard of carefulness*, this refers to the degree of respect or disrespect afforded to the Primal Right of others. Imagine a cook who practices poor hygiene while preparing meals for others, but would only practice good hygiene for meals they ate themselves. Clearly the cook understands the Primal Right at some level since they are exercising it to the end of their own subjective goodness, even while undermining it for others. This is contrasted with a cook who is negligent with food prepared for both others and himself; it is not clear that this cook conceives a cause-effect relationship between his actions and the resulting badness. Likewise, if a working man tosses an apple to a hungry beggar, he is not morally responsible for that goodness unless he regards it as a satisfaction for his own hunger too (which would not necessarily be the case if he tossed a can of dog food at the beggar instead), though his moral worth does increase as the object of the subjective goodness that beggar receives by the gift.

29. MERIT

'Whenever two people meet, there are really six people present. There is each man as he sees himself, each man as the other person sees him, and each man as he really is.'¹³⁵

WILLIAM JAMES

We already know about two kinds of moral valuations for a consciousness: its subjective moral valuation (the quality of its subjective experience), and its objective moral valuation (the type, number, and intensities of subjective experiences it causes for others), yet the concept of moral responsibility gives rise to a third moral valuation: merit. That is, a separate accounting of the objective moral valuation of a consciousness altered to reflect the degree to which that consciousness is culpable of those effects. As such, this third valuation only pertains to moral agents.

This third moral valuation takes greater account of intention than objective moral worth does.¹³⁶ Whereas objective moral worth is only concerned with pure consequentialism (via moral elements imposed on others), moral merit is concerned with the non-incidental bearing of a moral agent on those same effects.

FIGURE 29.1

TYPE OF MORAL VALUATION	NATURE OF MORAL VALUATION	TARGET OF MORAL VALUATION
Moral experience	Subjective	The subject of an experience
Moral worth	Objective	The object of an experience
Moral merit	Transjective ¹³⁷	The moral agent of an experience

FIGURE 29.2

QUALITY	MORAL EXPERIENCE	MORAL WORTH	MORAL MERIT
Good	Happy	Useful	Virtuous
Amoral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Bad	Miserable	Dangerous	Wicked

One can be happy, useful, and wicked, or miserable and dangerous though virtuous, or any other of these combinations.

¹³⁵ *Each man as he sees himself* is his own subjective value, *each man as he is seen* (encompassing his effects on the world) relates his objective worth, and *each man as he really is* alludes to his merit—an attribute not necessarily corresponding to the quality of his subjective experience, yet neither necessarily accurately perceived by others even given perfect knowledge of his lifelong actions.

¹³⁶ Since intention affects moral worth by the consequential risks and chances it imposes before moral responsibility is even considered.

¹³⁷ The bearing of a morally responsible conscious object upon a conscious subject, objectively beheld.

Moral Propensities

There are certain traits and conditions which can make it either easier or more difficult for a moral agent to actually be moral, and this reality should be considered when calculating moral merit. That is, a person who is naturally disposed to be kind, and even feels pleasure when being kind, is, while meritorious, less meritorious than a person who is outwardly just as kind but for whom it comes only at great effort.

The subjective cost (in badness) that a moral agent endures in the course of being virtuous¹³⁸ is reckoned in addition to the effect produced, and the subjective profit (in goodness) that a moral agent enjoys in that same way is subtracted from the effect produced.¹³⁹

For example, let us imagine Person A who (without either pain or pleasure) performs an act resulting in 100 bons for another consciousness. Person B performs the same act, but experiences 25 bons of pleasure in the performance. Person C performs the same act, but suffers 25 mals of pain in the performance. The net merit¹⁴⁰ of this act for Person A is 100 bons, for Person B is 75 bons, and for Person C is 125 bons.

Let us recall the case previously mentioned of the consciousness predisposed to promote or even commit genocide. Despite having negative worth assigned to them because of this (denoting dangerousness), this consciousness could end up being quite meritorious if in spite of this disposition (i.e., at great costs in effort) they fight against proposals of genocide. Indeed, they would earn more merit than another whose results were similar, but for whom it never occurred to act differently.

In practice, such propensities are not always innate; the same moral agent may at different times have other forces which make a given virtuous act easier or more difficult. Such propensities may not be in the form of pain and pleasure, but in other types of goodness or badness, such as risk. In every case, the merit of that moral agent is assessed not only by the good or bad done in the effects, but by the cost or boon propensities attending the moral agent in so causing them. Such costs encompass not only immediate costs relating to the act, but also costs incurred in coming to know right morals in the first place.¹⁴¹

The Moral Inverse Gap

As mentioned before, when there is some pain less than maximum pain being experienced, there is not only badness present, but also some goodness to the effect that it is not even worse (indeed, this is the same goodness, though in diminished

¹³⁸ Moral towards other consciousnesses.

¹³⁹ The same is true for wickedness: pleasure experienced during the commission of a bad act is subtracted from the negative moral merit of the perpetrating moral agent (in that to such extent the offense is made easier, or less resistible), and added to the negative moral merit in correspondence to the pain endured in order to undertake the offense (that is, it is worse in terms of virtue assessment when a offender goes to great unrewarded efforts to inflict badness on another than when no such efforts are required, or when there is extreme temptation to do so).

¹⁴⁰ As distinct from objective moral worth. Though goodness and badness cannot be meaningfully added or subtracted in subjective terms, some net figures can be useful when making intermediate, though not final, comparisons of (objective) merit.

¹⁴¹ Even one well-disposed to being moral must know what it is to actually *be* moral; if this is reasoned out, then the efforts in doing so are counted towards this person's merit.

quantity, which is present when there is no pain at all). This applies to occasions of real and potential moral responsibility as well.

Calculating Merit

Both positive and negative merit have been mentioned. These can be viewed like a fraction, with positive merit as the numerator and negative merit as the denominator. Negative merit consists of all the badness and positive merit all the goodness a moral agent is morally responsible for respectively (in each case also adjusted for propensity). A moral agent with a positive merit of 1,000 and a negative merit of 500 is represented as 1,000/500. Despite the temptation to simply divide this fraction to render a single merit score, this is not viable; a moral agent who has produced barely any effects (say, 2/1), would falsely be equated as having similar merit to one who had produced vastly greater moral effects, even if those effects happened to be in the same proportions.

To compare the relative merit of two or more moral agents, one must adjust the fractions for each such agent to reflect their time as such.¹⁴² In other words, a moral agent who cumulatively merited 12,000/400 over its fifty years¹⁴³ as a moral agent is less meritorious than another who merited 500/16 over its short two-year life as a moral agent. That is because when each one is adjusted for time, the former results in 240/8 whereas the second one results in 250/8. The shorter-lived moral agent in this case is responsible for ten more bons on a time-adjusted basis (without any difference in mals).

The most meritorious consciousness is hereby defined as the one with the least negative merit earned on average over time,¹⁴⁴¹⁴⁵ and when these are tied, the one with the most positive merit earned on average over time. That is, a moral agent with a time-adjusted ratio of 0/0 is more meritorious than one with a ratio of 1,000/1, since the latter is guilty of harming others, however nominally, whereas the former is wholly innocent. No amount of good can make one more meritorious, except within one's own cohort of blameworthiness.¹⁴⁶

Non-moral agent consciousnesses have no moral merit, neither positive or negative; they do, however (along with moral agents and non-consciousnesses) have ratios relating to their moral worth, that is, the total goodness and badness they have caused for consciousnesses (or other consciousnesses, as the case may be for those who are not moral agents themselves) without regard for moral responsibility. The ratio for any such moral object would be the time-adjusted ratio of caused goodness over caused badness.

¹⁴² A moral agent has not necessarily been a moral agent for their entire life as a consciousness.

¹⁴³ Or 240/8 on average for every year as a moral agent.

¹⁴⁴ A virtuous person who lives a very long life may have earned far more moral merits than a more virtuous person who had a far shorter lifespan; it is important then to measure the amount of earned good in proportion to time as a moral agent (say, bons per annum), so that a ranking seeking the most virtuous consciousness is achieving just that, and not merely the virtuous consciousness with the most longevity.

¹⁴⁵ That is, the most meritorious moral agent is foremost the one which has been the least wicked, and with that accounted for, then the one who has been the most virtuous.

¹⁴⁶ The good of ceasing harms previously regularly perpetrated, and avoiding future offense, should not be overlooked.

Every consciousness also has a ratio representing its moral experience. As before, the consciousness with the best moral experience is that consciousness which foremost has the least time-adjusted bad experience, and secondly (when tied), the most time-adjusted good experience. Thus a consciousness with a time-adjusted moral experience of 0/0 has overall had a better moral experience than one which has a time-adjusted ratio of 1,000/1 (a thousand bons yet one mal).¹⁴⁷

As with the Sphere of Experience and Moral Strands, these calculations are not inherent to morality itself, but rather a way to imagine the interface of our experience with the values pertaining to that experience, and that of others. As mentioned earlier, these types of calculations are at best only a cartoon of the underlying moral reality, since they do not preserve information about the intensity and frequency of such moral occasions. 1,000/1 where all one thousand mals are experienced (or imposed) in a single percept versus one where they are evenly distributed over one thousand non-consecutive percepts are dramatically different moral experiences that this metric glosses over. Inclusion of peak mals and peak bons would make a head-to-head comparison between experiences and the quality of conscious existence even more difficult.

All of this may seem excessively (and indeed, impossibly) precise to be of any use in practical moral calculations. But this difficulty arises from our lack of ability in accessing and recording moral transactions at the fine resolution at which they actually occur; any simplification of this accounting must (if it is to be a real simplification, and not merely a counter-productive fabrication) bear the real underlying calculus and its intrinsic units¹⁴⁸ in mind.

30. MORAL EQUILIBRIUM

As mentioned earlier, a **harm** is a particular type of subjectively bad experience. Yet the notion of harm, as opposed simply to badness, derives not from this subjective experience but from objective morality. A harm denotes an unjustified experience of badness (one that is purely in breach of morality), which ought therefore to be reversed.¹⁴⁹ This latter ought—in pursuit of justice—rests upon the principle that since badness ought not to be experienced, if it is experienced, then an acute asymmetry has

¹⁴⁷ It may not seem intuitive that a consciousness which has experienced 1,000 bons of goodness has had a worse moral experience than a consciousness which has never experienced any goodness nor badness, merely because of the experience of only one single mal. Yet the very meaning of 'worse' quickly clarifies this, in that 'worse' means 'more bad', and not only 'less good'. Even to the extent it can mean either of these things, it has more pertinence to a situation which has gone from bad to horrible than to one which has gone from perfect to merely wonderful. By derivative interests mentioned earlier in the paper, a consciousness may well decide it would rather choose the 1,000/1 existence to the 0/0 existence, but by the taking on of badness it is indisputably undertaking a moral transgression to do so, no matter how expedient it finds this transgression to be, and is thus morally subordinate to the one who does not so undertake transgression. Seeking the greater good most purely (which is to say, most morally) would be to increase goodness without increasing badness.

¹⁴⁸ Intrinsic in that bons and mals represent the intrinsic values of goodness and badness, as calibrated to real and discrete subjective experiences of pain and pleasure (cf. The Spheres of Experience and Value). The intrinsic units themselves are only estimated.

¹⁴⁹ In practice reversal of a harm is impossible, since it would require the erasure of an experience in past time. The next-closest address of such a moral breach is compensation, which is derivative of reversal and morally inferior to preventing that harm in the first place.

been created between what is and what ought to be (or, more accurately, between what was and what ought to have been). In this sense, justice can be defined as pursuit of **moral equilibrium**.

In essence, the point of all this is to favor not only goodness over badness, but lesser badness over greater badness, and greater goodness over lesser goodness. It provides a derivative framework in which to live life despite the inevitability of badness.¹⁵⁰

A **benefit**, on the other hand, is a particular type of subjectively good experience that is not morally unjustified. Morality pushes us to seek the highest good whenever and however we can. This refers not only to our own subjective goodness, but to the subjective goodness of all other consciousnesses.

Fairness is not just equality of subjective experiences, but subjective experiences linked to objective effects via the filter of will (moral merit). For one who has no will, and thus is not a moral agent and has thusly no moral merit, we can view the consciousness as merely a passenger, an agent only of feeling (primarily of suffering) of the organism they inhabit. Yet without any means by which they can really deserve any particular thing—even though as subjectively experiencing consciousnesses they are undoubtedly still subject to the tenets of morality already mentioned, including the Primal Right, and so forth.

Nevertheless, when we posit a being like a dangerous wild animal, the existence of which would be most undeserving if such effects were issued from a moral agent (the intentions of which were in harmony with such bad effects), we can only say that this organism poses a great harm to other consciousnesses, both directly in pain and in risk of further pain, and the consciousness associated with that organism is itself in a sense a victim of it, in that it has no control over its own actions or consequent reprisals for such actions.

This equilibrium also takes into account the distinction between active and passive goodness and badness. 1,000 mals of active badness is not fairly compensated by 1,000 bons of passive goodness, even if that ratio were deemed a reasonable tradeoff. Active badness is only compensated by active goodness, and passive badness by passive goodness.

31. SCALES OF JUSTICE

It is impossible to right a wrong. An experienced pain is crystallized in time and can never be revoked. Fairness is also impossible, and hence so is justice. Yet to be virtuous one must seek just or at least more just conditions. This seeking can be called **derivative justice**.¹⁵¹ It refers to exchanges at a small enough scale sufficient to push a situation closer to justice, yet without causing any further injustice beyond that scale. Such derivative justice must acknowledge the fact that the badness crystallized in the past is not correctable, yet sufficient goodness bestowed now or in the future may

¹⁵⁰ At minimum, via risk.

¹⁵¹ Injustice on the other hand is the disparity between subjective and objective morality within one consciousness, *i.e.*, between what it has experienced compared with what it is deserving of. In effect, a consciousness is deserving of maximum good at the outset, and this entitlement is by degrees eroded by the outward negative effects of such consciousness for which it is culpable.

better justify that bad experience. Likewise, though a perpetrator of badness, even if repentant, cannot undo the damage they caused, they can (if willing and able) potentially create enough surplus goodness to benefit their victim(s).^{152 153}

If we cannot achieve fairness, or even hope to come close, what can we do?

1. Enforce the Primal Right: protect consciousnesses from abuse, exploitation, and other preventable harms. Identify abusers and accelerants of abuse and combat them.

2. As an extension of this, prevent the creation of new abusers and victims (via antinatalism).

3. Arbitrate disagreements between parties according to common neutral standards formed in a valid causal chain from right morals and to end of their fulfillment.

32. ECONOMICS

Economics is the study and process of value. As such, it is derivative to the morality previously described. This means that the right goal of economics is to determine and then direct that each consciousness receives precisely the value to which it is entitled; no more, no less. Thus in theory it is no different than justice, even if in practice it forms its own domain.

Fundamentally we need to address what each consciousness is entitled to, distinct from both what they need and what they actually have, and again distinct from what is available.

Wealth is moral utility. That is, it is an entity external to consciousness which in its service can improve the value of its experiences. It exists in two forms: static (utility) and dynamic (power). Static wealth is constituted by material and intangible objects (like a can of peas, a plot of land, a house, an idea, a song, or even a view of a sunset) which have use in themselves, and dynamic wealth is constituted of abstract concepts, like stocks, bonds, options, and trademarks, which are at one remove or more from static wealth. The latter is only legitimate when in service to the former, which is to say when both its objective and actual execution of that objective is to morally allocate static wealth.

If all types of wealth were unlimited, any consciousness could use what it needed or wanted without depriving any other consciousness of anything. The economic status of property arises since possessions needed and/or wanted are insufficient to meet all such needs and/or wants, and this results inevitably in a contest between Primal Rights.

¹⁵² Or, if dead, those harmed by the specific or general occasion of the death.

¹⁵³ It is worth mentioning here that one cannot bank cruelty. One cannot accumulate badness as a subject in order to morally excuse being the object of that badness for others. Being subject to badness only justifies the future experience of compensatory goodness, and not mirroring the equivalent badness out into the world.

Wealth is rightfully property only if and while it is used toward the most moral end possible. That is to say, no consciousness rightfully possesses any property except when in so doing they are making the best moral use of it. In such case, no other consciousness can claim a superior right to it, and it would be immoral to do nothing with some item when it could be used toward a moral end instead.

On an individual level this is impossible to determine. Even if some useful item could be of great use to a particular consciousness, there is no way to determine if the greatest use is thereby made, or whether a million or even a billion other consciousnesses could make greater use of it.

Collectively, however, this concept is clear. All consciousnesses are collectively best-suited to make the best moral use of all things, and thus all useful things (i.e., all wealth) is rightfully owned by all consciousnesses. Note that this refers really to all consciousnesses, and not only human beings.¹⁵⁴

Another way to say this is a **Commonwealth of Consciousnesses** exists, to which all useful non-conscious things belong.¹⁵⁵ That is, as a set of possessions, 'all things' are the property of 'all consciousnesses', since any moral end always pertains to consciousness, and the best moral end is part of any moral end.

Thus when anything is taken for exclusive use, a debt is created to this Commonwealth; the same is true when a useful thing is destroyed, even if its destruction is by natural causes a deprivation occurs and thus a debt is created.

The Commonwealth can be said to have allodial title to all things, with those few things actually serving their highest good in a certain possession being seen as held in fee simple, and all other possessions being a kind of stewardship of varying justification.

This ultimately collective ownership of all wealth does not imply communism however (nor capitalism for that matter). There is still a moral imperative for each consciousness to either take or create what is needed to serve its own Primal Ought, and otherwise not to impede others in the same course; indeed, to help those others in need of it. The improvement and creation of new utility (wealth) is meritorious and makes the one so doing entitled by justice to goodness in such proportion, which could be in forms of wealth surplus to those forms scarce and yet needed for the survival of fellow consciousnesses.

That is to say, someone who creates one thousand bons of goodness where it did not exist before is more meritorious by one thousand additional bons. They are thus directly entitled to this new wealth themselves, except where it is surplus to their needs while also serving the needs of others. In that case, this new wealth rightfully belongs to those in greater need of it, while the creator of such wealth is entitled to other forms of wealth of equal goodness not in demand as necessities of that kind.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Neither solely to Earthlings.

¹⁵⁵ An item can be improved or degraded, created or destroyed, temporarily or permanently. Some items have the trait that they can be endlessly multiplied (like digital items or ideas).

¹⁵⁶ To illustrate present economic inequality, the average height of a human being is about 165 cm (5'5"). If wealth were directly correlated with height (with 165 cm indicating median global wealth per adult), then the average member of the global 1% would be 3.6 kilometers (2.2 miles) tall, and the

33. POLITICS

On an individual basis (i.e., of a non-official resident; the real governed), every government is totalitarian in every practical point. A government is unidirectional, arbitrary in the sense of not being fashioned by a given citizen, and, relative to an individual, wields absolute power.

The matter then is not whether a government is totalitarian from the perspective of any one citizen, since they all are, but rather how just are its laws, how consistent their enforcement, how durable are such laws to remain just and justly enforced (if they are), how in harmony the views of the citizenry with such laws and rulers, how worthy and meritorious those rulers, and foremost, how all of the above succeed or fail in supporting real morality, especially against the counter-weight of risk that inherently attends such a setup.

Just as justice is not truly distinct from economics, so politics is not truly distinct from either justice or economics. Politics is the study of power: the leverage of the will of one consciousness (or group of them) usually by the efforts of yet further consciousnesses (whose wills are aligned, either by perceived self-interest and/or by coercion). Power in this political sense could thus refer to one consciousness exerting its will over another one, or many, or a million consciousnesses exerting their will over just a few others, or any other combination. In each case there is one or more power-objects and one or more power-subjects.

Political power is distinct from authority, which only refers to power that is morally justified. Much of what is deemed authority, either as a noun or verb, is often radically mislabelled.

Authority is not delegated by individuals, but rather emits from an effective exercise of objective morality. In that sense, it is self-justifying by its effects. Nevertheless, in practical terms power is a dangerous attribute, and a certain badness by risk attends it in proportion to its intensity and scope, and in relation to the goals and reliability of the power-wielding agency.

Owing to this risk, power should not be granted or recognized except when and where absolutely necessary, which is to say, when and where individual authority is insufficient to meet moral needs, yet by which some organized group of individuals have a prospect of doing so in a manner that furnishes enough extra goodness to justify the accompanying badness.

richest person in the world would be 122,000 kilometers (76,000 miles) tall, nearly ten times taller than the earth is wide. *The Global Wealth Report*, Credite-Suisse Research Institute, October 2019.

SPECIFIC IMPLICATIONS

1. Truth

The universe itself has no value except as it bears upon one or more consciousnesses, so it stands to reason that no information about the universe would have value either, except as it relates to a consciousness.

There are many things it is far better not to know: disgusting and hurtful things. One must be careful not to reify the coping mechanisms used to retroactively justify gaining such negative knowledge.

2. Birth

'To beget is to increase the sum of evil.'

AL MA'ARI

Only consciousness can have interests. Potential consciousnesses are not consciousnesses. Therefore potential consciousnesses can have no interests. Therefore potential consciousnesses can have no interest in being born.

If one were however to weigh the potential interest of a potential consciousness, one must begin with the Primal and Meta Interests, which clearly prohibit the risk of pain.

¹⁵⁷ *Once imprisoned in a Sphere of Experience, there is always a risk of falling into the lower hemisphere of pain.* ¹⁵⁸ *Therefore being imprisoned in a Sphere of Experience is bad. Therefore coming into existence is bad, and so is its proximate cause (i.e., breeding). The only guarantees in life are pain and death. No minimum length of existence is guaranteed to a new consciousness, nor is the experience of pleasure, let alone enough pleasure to always sufficiently compensate one for the involuntary suffering which life always entails.*

A vicarious decision can only be justified to the end of reducing or preventing badness in the subject on whose behalf it is made—which antinatalism does automatically. So any invocation of this vicarious responsibility leads to the same result. The adolescent boy who in 1942 was strapped into a chair by Nazi scientists with a mechanical hammer striking his head at intervals until he went insane ¹⁵⁹ was the victim not only

¹⁵⁷ Although the Primal Interest would not exist in this non-extant consciousness, neither would pleasure and thus neither would the Mesmeric Interest. If however potential pleasure is invoked, then so must potential pain, and so the Primal Interest is activated, which deems existence via risk to be bad.

¹⁵⁸ The best possible subjective existence would entail the maximum time spent in the top of a Sphere of Experience. Yet this good still entails the badness of risk, not only of pain, but of dying. Taking on this significant risk is against the interest of any consciousness, and thus against the potential interest of a potential consciousness. If there is no interest in coming into existence under the best possible circumstances, it follows that there is also no interest in coming into existence under any circumstances worse than that—which exhausts the scenarios in which one could come into existence.

¹⁵⁹ *Remember Us: My Journey from the Shtetl Through the Holocaust*, by Martin Small and Vic Shayne, Skyhorse Publishing, 2009.

of this horrific cruelty, but of a vicarious decision by his parents to bring him into such an existence.

Imagine that ten years from now you will peacefully and painlessly die in your sleep, without any decline in health, yet with all your affairs in order. It is the best possible circumstance for death, and no one grieves for you, but yet their memories of you are happy and glad. Now imagine that in addition to this scenario, you are given the option of living a further ten years. Only in this case, you will have to re-train for new job skills, work for most of that time, and are all but guaranteed spending the last part of the decade in terminal and painful decline, with much left undone. The odds are you will not die in your sleep. Those left behind will grieve and suffer as they do so. Which would you choose? Would those extra ten years be worth the choice? It is plain from this scenario that it is the quality of life which makes those ten years worth living or not.

Now further imagine that you do not get to make this choice: it is done on your behalf by a third party. A third party who does not even envision your own interests in one option over another, but rather only considers their own interest in relation to these options. They view it as in their own benefit to deprive you of the peaceful and good first option, since (for example), they would profit by the medications you would need to buy and take during your illnesses in option two, or perhaps they once would have laughed at a joke you told during those latter ten years. Would such a decision be good or evil? Given the history of human exploitation, a third party choosing the second option for another, for selfish reasons, is unfortunately highly likely.

3. Life

The meaning of life is to be moral. Life entails pain which immediately gives rise to knowledge of morality—a morality which precedes and transcends such knowledge, and which is of dominant relevance not only to every moment of life but also to every issue relating to and surrounding life. Life is thus both the means to the end of being moral as well as the end for which such morality exists. This meaning refers both to the necessary goal of seeking goodness and avoiding badness, and also to the literal meaning that the value of life in general or a life in particular, either overall or in a given moment, is derived from morality.

As consciousnesses imprisoned in bodies of vulnerable flesh, we must attend to a hierarchy of needs (as described by Maslow), though in doing so we must constrain them insofar as possible by morality. We should do so in ways which incur the minimum cost, if any, in badness and to the maximum benefit (both to ourselves, and objectively). To the extent that our present actions bind our future selves, we also have a duty of care towards those future selves of ours which implies a healthy diet, exercise, personal safety and psychological well-being.

Love can be both good and bad; good in that it provides happiness (an ongoing pleasure) in the lovers, and also in the ways it can foster chances for good behavior by means of the empathy and compassion that can grow out of such a feeling; and also bad, by the risk of pain and actual pain that might be inevitable when love ends, which rarely occurs simultaneously. Love is thus subordinate to the forces of morality like any other part of life.

Living can instigate questions like 'Is life worth living?' ('Ought I continue to live?') and its other several permutations. The proper answer to these is always furnished by an application of value, which is to say morality. To live means to be a consciousness in a state of ongoing experience, and the quality of that experience varies widely and is ultimately unpredictable. And so whether or not a particular life is worth living is a question with a variable answer in constant flux, and also not solely limited to subjective concerns, given attachments formed by and toward others—thus invoking objective morality.

4. Death

There is no precept of morality which counts death as any special category of things, or which holds death to be of its nature any greater badness than any other experience independent of the principles previously described. Indeed, death is not innately good nor bad, but is likely to be a state (with reference to any particular consciousness or any group of them), like any other condition wrought with moral strands of both types.

Dying, on the other hand, with all the pain it entails, is likely always to be fraught with mals and thus badness. Even the dying of an evil consciousness whose death would be an advantage to the world is neither a good experience (in itself) for that consciousness, nor is it good for the wider world (in that by such death being painful, it is that much less attractive for evil consciousnesses, who will seek to avoid it). Also note that fear of death is bad in that it is a type of pain.

The Primal Right indicates that euthanasia should be available for those consciousnesses whose experience is on balance bad, and who wish to defend themselves from such ongoing bad experiences.

5. Aesthetics

Beauty is good in that it creates pleasure in the appreciative beholder. Ugliness is bad in that it creates pain in the beholder, or at minimum is a wasted opportunity for something better.

Therefore beauty should be a design principle in the creation of new things, subject to the principle that badness should not be further increased in the pursuit.

6. Fauna

'If your personal choice has a victim, then it's no longer a personal choice.'

ANONYMOUS

The breeding of new consciousnesses is bad, as shown in the previous section. This becomes even more apparent when the effect of such breeding is a life of exploitation, extreme suffering, and violent premature death, as is the case for the billions of animals bred and massacred annually for human use. Humans can not only survive but flourish on a vegan diet, and must adopt and maintain such a diet to avoid serious breaches of objective morality.

These distinct consciousnesses did nothing wrong. They are innocent. Yet they face fates worse than death; not a moment of kindness their entire lives. Not a single thing that you enjoy or their animal versions, nor a moment's satisfaction—but rather an unending stream of events each of which would be a nightmare to a human.

One can never erase the screams. They are still hanging there in time and space. And will do so forever. Even after the death of universe, those screams will be hanging there. As a direct result of certain dietary choices, a consciousness suffered. A distinct consciousness suffered. And nothing can ever change that. We can only try never to harm again, and to reach out in kindness and healing to those who have been harmed; those harmed by coming into existence, and suffering, at our frivolous behest.¹⁶⁰

The problem of wild animal suffering is even worse. It should not be viewed as a hopeless problem however. Sentience is likely correlated with sapience, and humane population control directed on a triage basis first towards those animals who by their capacity, lifestyles, and environments are most prone to suffer could result in a huge alleviation of badness in the world.

7. Happiness

'I make myself rich by making my wants few.'

THOREAU

A lot of badness is accrued in the pursuit of happiness, both for the pursuer and in collateral damage.

*You should seek not just happiness but **efficient happiness**—those pleasures which furnish the greatest benefit for the least cost (in badness), and which, being moral, also do not harm others. This means to first exhaust internal options such as mindfulness and imagination before resorting to material acquisition. These types of pleasures are not only free (or nearly so, counting effort), but they are less vulnerable than material things.*

You own imagination is a great place to begin. You can build an idealized home, community or even an entire world of comfort, beauty, and great wealth inside your mind that is impervious to theft or rot in the conventional sense. Cultivating happiness with less is virtually the same as getting more. Vaporize extraneous wants that do not serve your goals of virtue. Every want is a kind of pain, and even though life might often seem like a progress from one want to another,¹⁶¹ many of these wants can be suppressed with minimal mental exertion.

¹⁶⁰ To help remember this point, whenever you are tempted to, say, eat the flesh of a butchered cow, think of the equivalent cost (in pain) that this would mean for yourself. 'This particular meal came at a cost similar to my leg being cut off without anesthetic', or 'that particular meal would come at the equivalent cost of my fingernails being pulled off, and losing my most beloved friends.' Required notices to this effect on menus and food packaging would help to subvert such badness. Externalizing such costs of one's pleasure to other conscious individuals is objectively worse, not better, than bearing those costs oneself.

¹⁶¹ Credit to Samuel Johnson: 'Life is a progress from want to want'.

2194 *Also, you should subdue your ego to the greatest extent possible, and even imagine it*
2195 *vaporizing just like your wants. A large ego is a large liability, which opens both you*
2196 *and those around you to more suffering. It figuratively increases the gravity within*
2197 *your Sphere of Experience, making painful experiences more likely.*

2198
2199 *Being grateful for those things in your life which are already good, or at least not bad,*
2200 *is another way to promote your own pleasure and thus happiness. This gratitude,*
2201 *particularly when practiced mindfully, can promote good habits and further reveal the*
2202 *wisdom in helping others.*

2203
2204 *Smile. Be kind.*

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